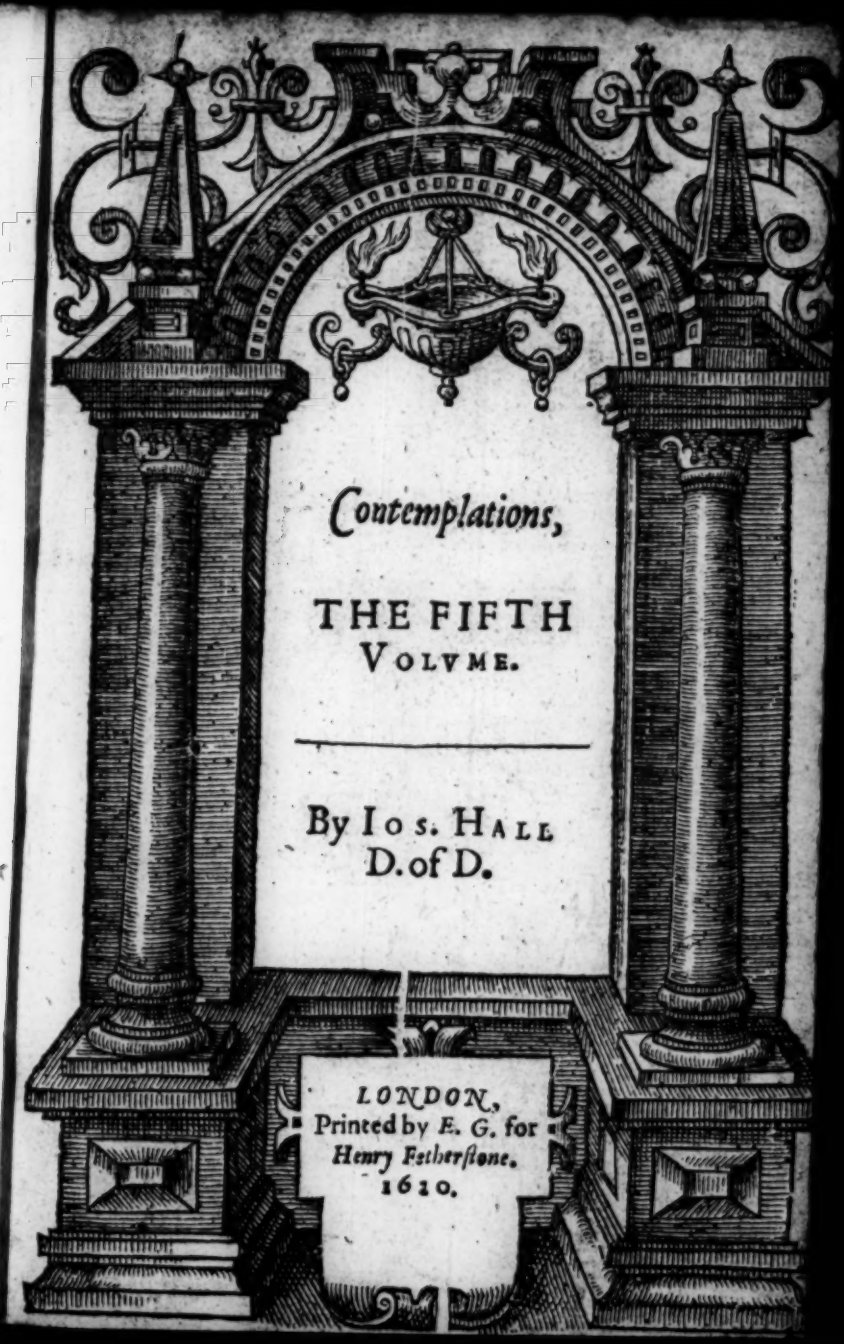


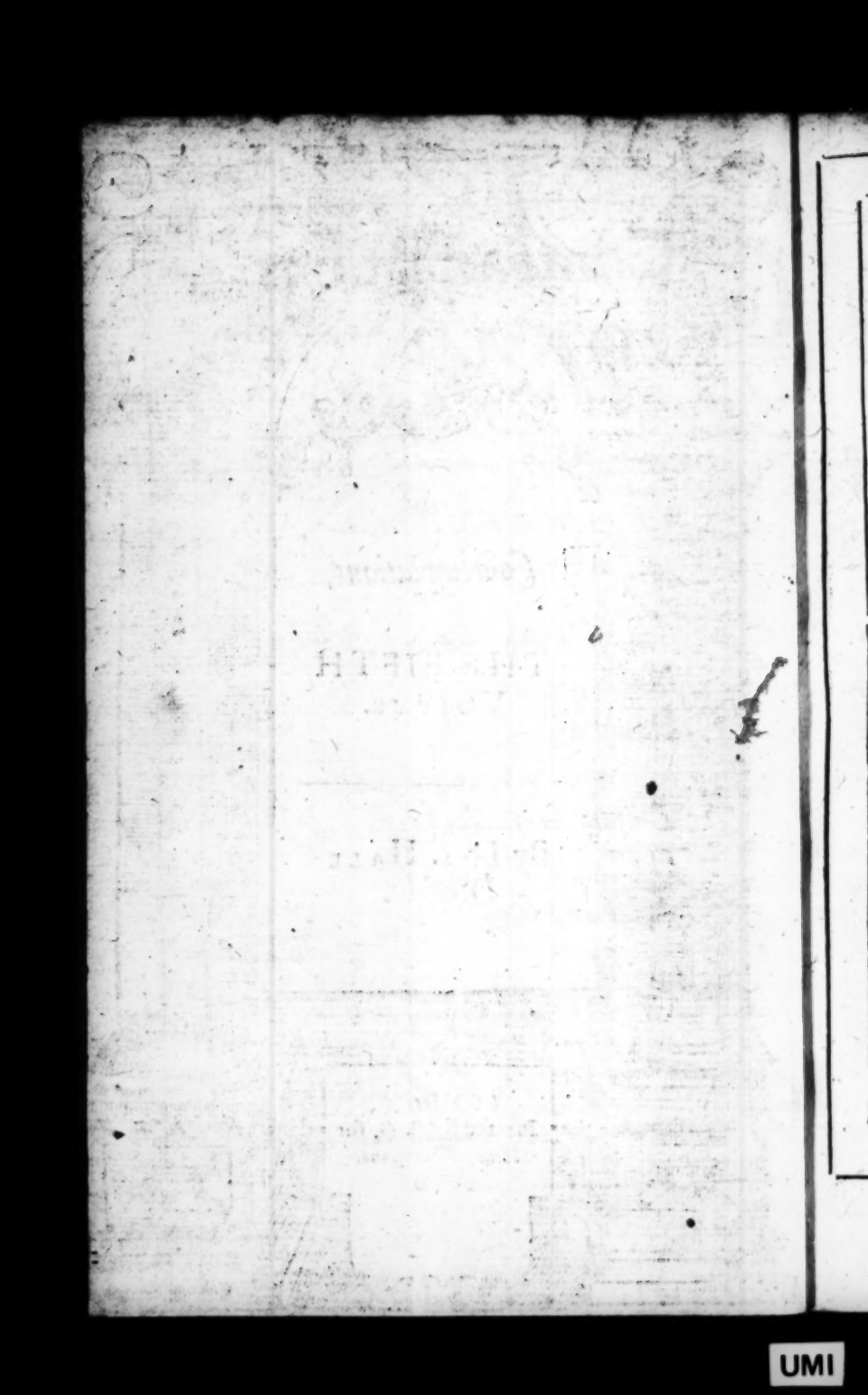
Contemplations,

THE FIFTH VOLVME.

By IOS. HALL D. of D.

LONDON,
Printed by *E. G.* for
Henry Fetherſtone.
1610.

UMI



Contemplations VPON THE OLD TESTAMENT.

The 14th. Booke.

Saul in Dauids Caue.
Nabal and Abigail.
Dauid and Achiſh.
Saul and the Witch of Endor.
Ziklag ſpoyled and reuenged.
The Death of Saul.
Abner and Ioab.

UMI

TO THE RIGHT HONOVRABLE, AND MY SINGVLAR good Lord, PHILIP Earle of MONGOMERY, one of the Gentlemen of his Maiesties Bed-chamber, and Knight of the most honourable Order of the Garter.

Right Honourable:

AFter some vnpleasing intermissions, I returne to that taske of Contemplation, wher-

wherein onely my soule findeth rest. If in other imployments I haue indeauoured to serue God and his Church, yet in none (I must confesse) with equall contentment. Me thinkes Controuersie *is not right in my way to Heauen; how euer the importunity of an aduersarie may force me to fetch it in: If Truth oppressed by an erroneous teacher cry (like a rauisht virgin) for my ayd, I betray it, if I releeue it not; when I haue done, I returne*

returne gladly to these paths of peace. The fauour which my late Polemicall labour hath found (beyond merit) from the learned, cannot diuert my loue to those wrangling studies. How earnestly doth my hart rather wish an vniuersall cessation of these armes; that all the Professors of the deare name of Christ might bee taken vp with nothing, but holy and peaceable thoughts of deuotion; the sweetnesse wherof hath so farre affected mee,

that (if I might doe it without danger of mis-construction) I could beg euen of an enemy this leaue to be happy. I haue already giuen account to the world, of some expences of my houres this way, & here I bring more; which if some reader may censure as poore, none can censure as vnprofitable. I am bold to write them vnder your Honourable Name, whereto I deeply obliged; that I may leaue behind me this meane, but faithfull Testimony, of

mine

mine humble thankefulneſſe to your Lo: and your moſt honored and vertuous Lady. The noble reſpects I haue had from you both, deſerue my prayers, & beſt ſeruices, which ſhall neuer bee wanting to you and yours,

From your Honors ſincerely

denoted in all true duty.

Ios. Hall.

UMI

Contemplations.

SAVL in DAVIDS Caue.

IT was the ſtrangelot of *Dauid*, that thoſe whom hee purſued, preſerued him from thoſe whom hee had preſerued; The Philiſtims, whom *Dauid*

Dauid had newly ſmitten in Keilah, call off *Saul* from ſmiting *Dauid* in the wilderneſſe, when there was but an hillock betwixt him and death: Wicked purpoſes are eaſily checked, not eaſily broken off. *Sauls* ſword is ſcarce dry from the bloud of the Philiſtims, when it thirſts anew for the bloud of *Dauid*; and now in a renued chaſe, hunts him dry-foot thorow euery wilderneſſe: The very deſert is too faire a refuge for innocence; The hils and rocks are ſearched in an angry icalouſie; the very wilde goats of the mountaines were not allowed to bee companions for him, which had no fault but his vertue.

tue. Oh the ſeemingly-vnequall diſtribution of theſe earthly things; Cruelty and oppreſſion raignes in a palace, whiles goodneſſe lurkes among the rockes and caues, and thinkes it happineſſe enough to ſteale a life.

Like a dead man, *Dauid* is faine to be hid vnder the earth, and ſeekes the comfort of protection in darkneſſe: and now the wiſe prouidence of God leads *Saul* to his enemy without bloud; He, which before brought them within an hils diſtance without interview, brings them now both within one roofe; ſo as that whiles *Saul* ſeekes *Dauid* and findes him not, hee is found of *Dauid* vnſought. If

Saul

Saul had knowne his owne opportunities, how *Dauid* and his men had interred themſelues, he had ſaued a treble labour, of chaſe, of execution, and buriall; for had he but ſtopt the mouth of that caue, his enemies had layd themſelues downe in their owne graues: The wiſdome of God thinkes fit to hide from euill men, & ſpirits, thoſe means and ſeaſons, which might be (if they had been taken) moſt preiudiciall to his owne: Wee had been oft foyled, if Satan could but haue knowne our hearts: ſomtimes wee lye open to euils, and happy it is for vs that hee onely knowes it, which pitties in ſteed of tempting vs.

It

It is not long, ſince *Saul* ſayd of *Dauid* (lodged them in Keilah) God hath deliuered him into mine hands, for he is ſhut in, ſeeing hee is come into a City that hath gates and bars; but now contrarily God deliuers *Saul* (ere he was aware) into the hands of *Dauid*, and without the helpe of gates and bars, hath incloſed him within the valley of the ſhadow of death: How iuſt it is with God, that thoſe who ſeeke miſcheefe to others, finde it to themſelues; and euen whiles they are ſpredding nets, are inſnared; Their deliberate plotting of euill, is ſurprized with a ſudden judgement.

How amazedly muſt *Dauid* needes

needes looke, when he ſaw *Saul* enter into the caue, where himſelfe was? what is this (thinkes hee) which God hath done? Is this preſence purpoſed, or caſuall; is *Saul* here to purſue, or to tempt me? Where ſuddenly the action bewrayes the intent, and tels *Dauid* that *Saul* ſought ſecrecy and not him. The ſuperfluity of his malicioufneſſe brought him into the wilderneſſe, the neceſſity of nature led him into the caue: Euen thoſe actions wherin we place ſhame, are not exempted from a prouidence. The fingers of *Dauids* followers itched to ceaſe on their Maſters enemy; and that they might not ſeeme led ſo much

much by faction, as by faith, they vrge *Dauid* with a promiſe from God; The day is come whereof the Lord ſaid vnto thee, Behold, I will deliuer thine enemie into thine hand, and thou ſhalt do to him, as it ſhall ſeeme good to thee. This argument ſeemed to carry ſuch command with it, as that *Dauid* not onely may, but muſt embrue his hands in blood, vnleſſe he will bee found wanting to God and himſelfe, thoſe temptations are moſt powerfull, which fetch their force from the pretence of a religious obedience: Whereas thoſe which are rayſed from arbitrary and priuate reſpects, admit of an eaſie diſpenſation.

If there were ſuch a prediction, one clauſe of it was ambiguous; and they take it at the worſt: Thou ſhalt doe to him as ſhall ſeeme good to thee: that might not ſeeme good to him, which ſeemed euill vnto God. There is nothing more dangerous then to make conſtruction of Gods purpoſes out of euentuall appearances, If carnall probabilities might be the rule of our iudgement, what could God ſeeme to intend other then *Sauls* death in offering him naked into the hands of thoſe whom he vniuſtly perſecuted? how could *Dauids* ſoldiers thinke that God had ſent *Saul* thither on any other errand, then to fetch his bane,

bane, and if *Saul* could haue ſeene his owne danger, hee had giuen himſelfe for dead; for his hart guilty to his owne bloody deſires could not but haue expected the ſame meaſure which is meant: But wiſe and holy *David* not tranſported either with miſconceit of the euent, or fury of paſſion, or ſollicitation of his followers dares make no other vſe of this accident then the triall of his loyalty, and the inducement of his peace; It had beene as eaſie for him to cut the throate of *Saul* as his garment; but now his coate only ſhall be the worſe, not his perſon; neither doth he in the mayming of a cloake ſeeke his

own reuenge, but a monument of his innocence. Before *Saul* rent *Samuels* garment, now *Dauid* cutteth *Sauls*; both were significant; The rending of the one, signified the Kingdome torne out of those vnworthy hands; the cutting of the other, that the life of *Saul* might haue beene as easily cut off.

Saul needs no other monitor of his owne danger, then what he weares. The vpper garment of *Saul* was laid aside, whiles he went to couer his feete; so as the cut of the garment, did not threaten any touch of the body, yet euen this violence offered to a remote garment strikes the hart of *Dauid*, which findes

a preſent remorſe for harmefully touching, that which did once touch the perſon of his maiſter, Tender conſciences are moued to regret at thoſe actions, which ſtrong harts paſſe ouer with a careleſſe eaſe. It troubled not *Saul* to ſeeke after the blood of a righteous ſeruant; there is no leſſe difference of conſciences then ſtomackes; Some ſtomacks will digeſt the hardeſt meates, and turne ouer ſubſtances, not in their nature edible, whiles others ſurfet of the lighteſt food, and complaine euen of dainties: Euery gratious hart is in ſome meaſure ſcrupulous, and findes more ſafetie in feare, then in preſumption: And

if it be ſo ſtrait as to curbe it ſelfe in from the libertie which it might take in things which are not vnlawfull, how much leſſe will it dare to take ſcope vnto euill: By how much that ſtate is better, where nothing is allowed, then where all things; by ſo much is the ſtrict and timorous conſcience better then the lawleſſe. There is good likelyhood of that man which is any way ſcrupulous of his wayes; but he which makes no bones of his actions, is apparently hopeleſſe.

SINCE *Dauids* followers pleaded Gods teſtimony to him as a motiue to blood. *Dauid* appeales the ſame God for his preſeruation

ſeruation from blood. The Lord keepe me from doing that thing to my maiſter the Lords anoynted; and now the good man hath worke enough to defend both himſelfe and his perſecuter, himſelfe, from the importunate neceſſitie of doing violence, and his maiſter from ſuffering it. It was not more eaſie to rule his owne hands, then difficult to rule a multitude: *Dauids* troupe conſiſted of male-contents, all, that were in diſtreſſe, in debt, in bitterneſſe of ſoule were gathered to him: Many if neuer ſo well ordered, are hard to command, a few if diſorderly, more hard; many and diſorderly muſt needes be

ſo much the hardeſt of all, that *Dauid* neuer atchiued any victorie like vnto this, wherein the firſt ouercame himſelfe, then his ſoldiers.

And what was the charme, wherewith *Dauid* allayed thoſe raging ſpirits of his followers? No other but this; He is the Anoynted of the Lord. That holy oyle was the Antidote for his blood; *Saul* did not lend *Dauid* ſo impearceable an Armour, when he ſhould incounter *Goliah*, as *Dauid* now lent him in this plea of his vnction. Which of all the diſconted outlawes that lurked in that caue, durſt put forth his hand againſt *Saul*, when they once heard, He

is

is the Lords anoynted: Such an impreſſion of awe hath the diuine prouidence cauſed his Image to make in the harts of men, as that it makes traytors cowards; So as inſteed of ſtriking they tremble; How much more lawleſſe, then the outlawes of Iſrael are thoſe profeſſed Ring-leaders of Chriſtianity; which teach and practiſe, and incourage, and reward, and canonize the violation of maieſtie. It is not enough for thoſe who are commanders of others to refraine their owne hands from euill, but they muſt carefully preuent the iniquitie of their heeles, elſe they ſhall bee iuſtly reputed to doe that by

others, which in their owne perſon they auoyded; the lawes both of God and man, preſuppoſe vs in ſome ſort anſwerable for our charge: as taking it for granted, that wee ſhould not vndertake thoſe raynes, which we cannot mannage.

There was no reaſon *Dauid* ſhould looſe the thankes of ſo noble a demonſtration of his loyalty; Whereto he truſts ſo much, that hee dares call backe the man by whom he was purſued; and make him iudge whether that fact had not deſerued a life. As his act, ſo his word and geſture imported nothing but humble obedience, neither was there more meeke-

neſſe then force in that ſeaſonable perſwaſion; Wherein hee lets *Saul* ſee the error of his credulity, the vniuſt ſlaunders of maliciouſneſſe, the oportunity of his reuenge, the proofe of his forbearance, the vndeniable euidence of his innocence; and after a lowly diſparagement of himſelfe, appeales to God for iudgement, for protection.

So liuely and feeling oratory did *Saul* finde in the lap of his garment, and the lips of *Dauid*, that it is not in the power of his enuy, or ill nature to hold out any longer. Is this thy voyce my ſonne *Dauid*, and *Saul* lift vp his voyce and wept, and ſaid: Thou art more righteous then

then I; Hee, whoſe harpe had wont to quiet the frenzy of *Saul*, hath now by his words calmed his fury; ſo as now hee ſheds teares in ſteed of blood: and confeſſes his owne wrong, and *Dauids* integrity; And (as if he were new againe entered into the bounds of *Naioth* in Ramath) he prayes, and propheſies good to him, whom he maliced for good; The Lord render thee good for that thou haſt done to mee this day; for now behold I know that thou ſhalt be king. There is no hart made of fleſh, that ſome time or other relents not, euen flint and marble, will in ſome wether ſtand on dropes. I cannot think theſe

theſe teares and proteſtations fayned. Doubtleſſe *Saul* meant as he ſaid, and paſſed through ſenſible fits of good and euill: Let no man like himſelfe the better for good motions; the prayſe and benefit of thoſe gueſts is not in the receit, but the retention.

Who, that had ſeene this meeting, could but haue thought all had beene ſure on *Dauids* ſide? What can ſecure vs if not teares, and prayers and oathes? Doubtleſſe *Dauids* men which knew themſelues obnoxious to lawes and creditors, began to thinke of ſome new refuge, as making account this new peeced league would be euerlaſting; they looked

ked when *Saul* would take *Dauid* home to the court, and dissolue his army, and recompence that vniust persecution with iust honor; when behold in the looſe, *Saul* goes home, but *Dauid* and his men goe vp vnto the hold. Wise *Dauid* knowes *Saul* not to be more kinde, then vntrusty; and therefore had rather seeke safely in his hold, then in the hold of an hollow and vnsteedy friendship. Heere are good words but no security, which therefore an experienced man giues the hearing, but stands the while vpon his own guard. No charity bindes vs to a trust of those, whom we haue found faithlesse; Credulity

vpon

vpon weake grounds after palpable disapointments, is the daughter of folly : A man that is weatherwise, though he finde an abatement of the storme, yet will not stirre from vnder his shelter whiles. hee sees it thicke in the winde, distrust is the iust gaine of vnfaithfulnesse.

Nabal

Nabal and Abigail.

IF innocency could haue ſecurd from *Sauls* malice, *Dauid* had not beene perſecuted; and yet vnder that wicked King, aged *Samuel* dies in his bed. That there might be no place for enuy, the good Prophet had retyred himſelfe to the Schooles. Yet hee that hated *Dauid*, for what hee ſhould bee, did no leſſe hate *Samuel* for what hee had beene. Euen in the midſt of *Sauls* malignity, there remained in his heart

heart impreſſions of awfulneſſe vnto *Samuel*: hee feared, where he loued not. The reſtraint of God curbeth the rage of his moſt violent enemies, ſo as they cannot doe their worſt. As good husbands, doe not put all their corne to the ouen, but ſaue ſome for ſeed, ſo doth God euer in the worſt perſecutions.

SAMVEL is dead, *Dauid* baniſhed, *Saul* tyranizeth, Iſrael hath good cauſe to mourne; it is no maruell if this lamentation be vniuerſall. There is no Iſraelite that feeleth not the loſſe of a *Samuel*. A good Prophet is the common treaſure, wherin euery gracious ſoule hath a ſhare. That man hath a dry heart, which

can part with Gods Prophet without teares.

NABAL was according to his name fooliſh; yet rich and mighty. Earthly poſſeſſions are not alwayes accompanied with wit and grace. Euen the line of faithfull *Caleb* will afford an ill-condition'd *Nabal*. Vertue is not like vnto lands inheritable. All that is traduced with the ſeede, is either euill, or not good. Let no mam brag with the Iewes, that he hath *Abram* to his father; God hath raiſed vp of this ſtone, a ſonne to *Caleb*.

ABIGAIL (which ſignified her fathers ioy) had ſorrow enough to bee matched with ſo vnworthy an husband; If her father

father had meant, shee should haue had ioy in herselfe, or in her life, he had not disposed her to an husband (though rich) yet fond and wicked; It is like hee married her to the wealth, not to the man. Many a childe is cast away vpon riches. Wealth in our matches, should bee as some graines or scruples in the balance, superadded to the gold of vertuous qualities, to weigh downe the scales; when it is made the substance of the weight, and good qualities the appendance, there is but one earth poysed with another; which, wheresoeuer it is done, it is a wonder, if either the children proue not the parents sor-

row, or the parents, theirs.

Nabals sheep-shearing was famous; Three thousand fleeces must needes require many hands; neither is any thing more plentiful commonly then a Churles feast: What a world was this, that the noble Champion & Rescuer of Israel, Gods Anoynted, is driuen to send to a base Carle for victuals? It is no measuring of men by the depth of the purse, by outward prosperity. Seruants are oft-times set on horse-backe, whiles Princes walke on foot. Our estimation must bee led by their inward worth, which is not alterable by time, nor diminishable with externall conditions.

One

ONE rag of a *Dauid* is more worth, then the ward-robes of a thousand *Nabals*. Euen the best deseruings may want. No man may be contemned for his necessity; perhaps he may be so much richer in grace, as hee is poorer in estate; neither hath violence or casualty more impouerished a *Dauid*, then his pouerty hath enriched him. Hee, whose folly hath made himselfe miserable, is iustly rewarded with neglect; but he, that suffers for good, deserues so much more honour from others, as his distresse is more. Our compassion or respect must be ruled, according to the cause of anothers misery.

One good turne requires another; in some cases not hurting is meritorious: Hee that should examine the qualities of *Dauids* followers must needes grant it worthy of a fee, that *Nabals* flocks lay vntouched in Carmel; but more, that *Dauids* Souldiers were *Nabals* Sheepheards; yea, the keepers of his shepheards, gaue them a just interest in that sheep-shearing feast, justly should they haue beene set at the vpper end of the table. That *Nabals* sheepe were safe, he might thanke his Shepheards; that his Shepheards were safe, hee might thanke *Dauids* Souldiers; It is no small benefit that wee receiue in a safe

prote-

protection; well may we think our ſubſtance due, where wee owe our ſelues. Yet this churliſh *Nabal* doth not onely giue nothing to *Dauids* meſſengers, but which is worſe then nothing, ill words; *Who is Dauid, or who is the ſonne of Iſhai*; There be many ſeruants now a dayes, that breake away from their Maſters. *Dauid* asked him bread, he giues him ſtones. All Iſrael knew, and honored their Deliuerer; yet this Clown, to ſaue his victuals, will needs make him a man, either of no merits of ill, either an obſcure man, or a Fugitiue. Nothing is more cheap then good words; theſe *Nabal* might haue giuen, and been ne-

uer the poorer; If he had beene reſolued to ſhut his hands, in a feare of *Sauls* reuenge, he might haue ſo tempered his deniall, that the repulſe might haue beene free from offence: But now his foule mouth doth not onely deny, but reuile. It ſhould haue beene *Nabals* glory, that his Tribe yeelded ſuch a Succeſſor to the Throne of Iſrael; now in all likelyhood, his enuy ſtirs him vp to diſgrace that man, who ſurpaſſed him in honour and vertue, more then hee was ſurpaſſed by him in vertue and eaſe; Many an one ſpeaks faire, that meanes ill, but when the mouth ſpeakes foule, it argues a corrupt heart; If with S. *Iames* his

his verball beuefactors, wee ſay onely, Depart in peace, warme your ſelues, fill your bellies, wee ſhall anſwer for hypocriticall vncharitableneſſe, but if wee rate & curſe thoſe needy ſoules, whom we ought to releeue, wee ſhall giue a more fearefull account of a ſauage cruelty, in trampling on thoſe whom God hath humbled. If healing with good words bee juſtly puniſhable, what torment is there for thoſe that wound with euill.

DAVID, which had all this while beene in the ſchole of patience; hath now his leſſon to ſeeke; Hee, who had happily digeſted all the rayling and perſecutions of a wicked Maſter, cannot

cannot put off this affront of a *Nabal*, Nothing can aſſwage his choler, but bloud; How ſubiect are the beſt of Gods Saints to weake paſſions, and if wee haue the grace to ward an expected blow of temptations, how eaſily are wee ſurprized with a ſudden foe. Wherefore ſerue theſe recorded weakneſſes of holy men, but to ſtrengthen vs againſt the conſcience of our infirmities? not that we ſhould take courage to imitate them in the euill, whereunto they haue been miſcarried; But we ſhould take heart to our ſelues, againſt the diſcouragement of ourown euils.

The wiſdome of God hath ſo

ſo contriued it, that commonly (in ſocieties) good is mixed with euill; wicked *Nabal* hath in his houſe a wife and good ſeruant, a prudent and worthy wife; That wiſe ſeruant is carefull to aduertiſe his Miſtreſſe of the danger; his prudent Miſtreſſe is carefull to preuent it.

THE liues of all his family were now in hazard: ſhe dares not commit this buſineſſe to the fidelity of a meſſenger, but forgetting her ſex, puts herſelfe into the errand; Her foot is not ſlow, her hand is not empty; According to the offence ſhee frames her ſatisfaction; Her husband refuſed to giue, ſhee brings a bountiful gift; her huſ-

band

band gaue ill words, ſhee ſweetens them with a meeke and humble deprecation; Her huſband could ſay, *Who is Dauid?* ſhe fals at his feet; her husband diſmiſſes *Dauids* men empty, ſhe brings her ſeruants laden with prouiſion; as if it had been only meant to eaſe the repelled meſſengers of the carriage, not to ſcant them of the required beneuolence; No wit, no art could deuiſe a more pithy and powerfull Oratory: As all ſatisfaction, ſo hers, begins with a confeſſion, wherein ſhee deeply blameth the folly of her huſband: She could not haue been a good wife, if ſhee had not honoured her vnworthy head; If a ſtranger

a ſtranger ſhould haue termed him foole in her hearing, hee could not haue gone away in peace: Now to ſaue his life, ſhe is bold to acknowledge his folly: It is a good diſparagement that preſerueth. There is the ſame way to our peace in heauen; the only meanes to eſcape judgement, is to complaine of our owne vileneſſe; ſhee pleadeth her ignorance of the fact, and therein, her freedome from the offence; ſhe humbly craueth acceptation of her preſent, with pardon of the fault; ſhe profeſſeth *Dauids* honorable acts and merits; ſhee foretels his future ſucceſſe and glory; ſhe layes before him the happy peace of his ſoule,

ſoule, in refraining from innocent bloud. *Dauids* breſt, which could not through the ſeeds of grace, grow to a ſtubborneſſe in ill reſolutions, cannot but relent with theſe powerfull and ſeaſonable perſwaſions; and now, in ſteed of reuenge, hee bleſſeth God for ſending *Abigail* to meet him; he bleſſeth *Abigail* for her councell, hee bleſſeth the councell for ſo wholſome efficacy, and now reioyceth more in being ouercome with a wiſe and gracious aduice, then he would haue reioyced in a reuengefull victory.

A good heart is eaſily ſtayed from ſinning, and is glad when it findes occaſion to bee croſſed

in

in ill purpoſes; Thoſe ſecret checks which are raiſed within it ſelfe, do readily conſpire with all outward retentiues; It neuer yeelded to a wicked motion, without much reluctation, and when it is ouercome, it is but with halfe a conſent; whereas peruerſe and obdurate ſinners, by reaſon they take full delight in euill, and haue already in their conceit ſwallowed the pleaſure of ſin, abide not to bee reſiſted, running on headily, in thoſe wicked courſes they haue propounded, in ſpight of oppoſition; and if they bee forcibly ſtopped in their way, they grow ſullen and mutinous. *Dauid* had not only vowed, but deeply

ſworne

ſworne the death of *Nabal*, and all his family, to the very dog that lay at his doore; yet now he praiſeth God, that hath giuen the occaſion and grace to violate it. Wicked vowes are ill made, but worſe kept. Our tongue cannot tye vs to commit ſinne. Good men thinke themſelues happy, that ſince they had not the grace to deny ſin; yet they had not the opportunity to accompliſh it. If *Abigail* had ſit ſtill at home, *Dauid* had ſinned, and ſhe had dyed: Now her diſcreet admonition hath preſerued her from the ſword, and diuerted him from bloudſhed. And now, what thankes, what benedictons hath ſhee for this

this ſeaſonable Councell. How ſhould it encourage vs to admoniſh our brethren; to ſee that if wee preuaile, wee haue bleſſings from them; if we preuaile not, we haue yet bleſſings from God, and thankes of our owne hearts.

How neere was *Nabal* to a miſcheefe, and perceiues it not? *Dauid* was comming at the foot of the hill to cut his throat, while hee was feaſting in his houſe without feare; Little doe ſinners know, how neere their iollity is to perdition. Many time iudgement is at the threſhold, whiles drunkenneſſe and ſurfet are at the boord. Had he beene any other then a *Nabal*, he

had not ſate downe to feaſt, till he had beene ſure of his peace with *Dauid*; either not to expect danger, or not to cleare it, was ſottiſh; So fooliſh are carnall men, that giue themſelues ouer to their pleaſures, whiles there are deadly quarrels depending againſt them in Heauen. There is nothing wherein wiſdome is more ſeene, then in the temperate vſe of proſperity. A *Nabal* cannot abound, but he muſt be drunke and ſurfet; Exceſſe is a true argument of folly: We vſe to ſay, that When drinke is in, wit is out; but if wit were not out, drinke would not be in.

It was no time to aduiſe *Nabal*, while his reaſon was drowned

ned in a deluge of wine. A beaſt or a ſtone is as capable of good councell, as a Drunkard. Oh that the nobleſt Creature ſhould ſo farre abaſe himſelfe, as for a little liquor, to loſe the vſe of thoſe faculties, whereby he is a Man. Thoſe that haue to doe with drinke or phrenzy, muſt be glad to watch times; So did *Abigail*, who the next morning preſents to her husband, the view of his faults, of his danger; He then ſees how neere hee was to death, and felt it not. That worldly minde is ſo apprehenſiue of the death that ſhould haue beene, as that hee dies, to thinke he had like to haue dyed; Who would think a man could

bee ſo affected with a danger paſt, and yet ſo ſenceleſſe of a future, yea imminent? He that was yeſter-night as a beaſt, is now as a ſtone; hee was then ouer-merry, now dead and lumpiſh; Carnall hearts are euer in extremity. If they bee once downe, their deſection is deſperate, becauſe they haue no inward comfort, to mitigate their ſorrow; What difference there was betwixt the diſpoſition of *Dauid* and *Nabal*? How oft had *Dauid* beene in the valley of the ſhadow of death, and feared no euill? *Nabal* is but once put in minde of a death that might haue been, and is ſtricken dead. It is juſt with God, that they who

who liue without grace, ſhould dye without comfort; neither can we expect better, while wee goe on in our ſins. The ſpeech of *Abigail* ſmote *Nabal* into a qualme; that tongue had doubtleſſe oft aduiſed him well, and preuailed not; now, occaſions his death, whoſe reformation it could not effect; ſhee meant nothing but his amendment; God meant to make that louing Inſtrument the meanes of his reuenge: ſhe ſpeakes, and God ſtrikes; within ten dayes, that ſwound ends in death. And now *Nabal* payes deare for his vncharitable reproch; for his riotous exceſſe; That God, which would not ſuffer *Dauid* to

right himſelfe by his owne ſword, takes the quarrell of his Seruant into his owne hand; *Dauid* hath now his ends without ſin; reioycing in the juſt executions of God, who would neither ſuffer him to ſinne in reuenging, nor ſuffer his aduerſary to ſin vnreuenged.

Our louing God is more angry with the wrongs done to his ſeruants, then themſelues can be, and knowes how to puniſh that juſtly, which we could not vndertake with wronging God, more then men haue wronged vs. He that ſaith, *Vengeance is mine, I will repay*, repayes oft-times when we haue forgiuen, when we haue forgotten; and

and cals to reckoning after our discharges; It is dangerous offending any fauorite of him, whose displeasure and reuenge is euerlasting.

HOW farre God lookes beyond our purposes? *Abigail* came only to plead for an ill husband; and now God makes this iourney a preparation for a better; So that in one act, shee preserud an ill husband, and wonne a good one for the future; *Dauid* well remembers her comely person, her wise speeches, her gracefull carriage; and now, when modesty found it seasonable; he sendes to sue to her, which had beene his suppliant; she intreated for her

husband, *Dauid* treates with her for his wife; her requeſt was to eſcape his ſword, hee wiſheth her to his bed; It was a faire ſuite to change a *Dauid* for a *Nabal*; to become *Dauids* Queene, in ſteed of *Nabals* drudge; ſhee that learned humilitie vnder ſo hard a Tuter, abaſeth her ſelfe no leſſe when *Dauid* offers to aduance her; (Let thine hand-maid be a ſeruant to waſh the feet of the ſeruants of my Lord) None are ſo fit to be great, as thoſe that can ſtoope loewſt: How could *Dauid* be more happy in a wife; he finds at once piety, wiſdom, humility, faithfulnes, wealth, beauty? How could *Abigail* bee more

more happy in an husband, then in the Prophet, the Champion, the Anoynted of God? Thoſe mariages are well made, wherein vertues are matched, and happineſſe is mutuall.

Dauid

Dauid and Achiſh.

GOOD motions that fall into wicked harts, are like ſome ſparks that fall from the flint and ſteele, into wet tinder; lightſome for the time, but ſoone out. After *Sauls* teares and proteſtations, yet is he now againe, in the wildernes with three thouſand men to hunt after inocent *Dauid*: How inuincible is the charity and loyalty of an honeſt hart? The ſame hand that ſpared *Saul* in the

the caue, ſpares him ſleeping in the field; The ſame hand that cut away the lappe of his maiſters garment; caryed away his ſpeare; that ſpeare, which might as well haue caryed away, the life of the owner; is only born away for a proofe of the fidelity of the bearer. Still *Saul* is ſtrong, but *Dauid* victorious, and triumphs ouer the malice of his perſecutor; Yet ſtill the victor flyeth, from him whom he hath ouercome; A man that ſees; how farre *Saul* was tranſported, with his rancorous enuy, cannot but ſay, that hee was neuer more mad then when he was ſober; For euen after he had ſaid (Bleſſed art thou my ſonne

Dauid

Dauid, thou ſhalt do great things and alſo preuaile;) yet ſtill hee purſues him; whom hee grants aſſured to preuaile; what is this but to reſolue to looſe his labour in ſinning? and in ſpight of himſelfe to offend? How ſhamefull is our inequality of diſpoſition to good? We know we cannot miſſe of the reward of well-doing, and yet doe it not; whiles wicked men caſt away their endeauours vpon thoſe euill proiects, whereof they are ſure to faile; ſinne blindes the eyes and hardens the heart, and thruſts men into wilfull miſchiefes, how euer dangerous, how euer impoſſible; and neuer leaues them till it

it haue brought them to vtter confuſion.

THE ouer-long continuance of a tentation, may eaſily weary the beſt patience: and may attaine that by protraction, which it could neuer doe by violence; *Dauid* himſelfe at laſt begins to bend vnder this triall; and reſolues ſo to flee from *Saul*, as that hee runnes from the Church of God; and whiles he will auoyde the malice of his maſter, ioynes himſelfe with Gods enemies. The greateſt Saints vpon earth, are not alwayes vpon the ſame pitch of ſpirituall ſtrength; He that ſometimes ſaid (I will not be affraid for ten thouſand, now ſaies,

saies, I shall perish one day by the hand of *Saul*) He had wont to consult with God, now hee saies thus in his owne hart; How many euident experiments had *Dauid* of Gods deliuerances; how certaine and cleare predictions of his future Kingdome; how infallible earnest was the holy oyle, wherewith hee was anoynted, of the crowne of Israel? And yet (*Dauid* said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of *Saul*:) The best faith, is but like the twy-light, mixed with some degrees of darkness, & infidelity; We doe vtterly misreakon the greatest earthly holinesse, if we exempt it from infirmities; It is not

not long ſince *Dauid* told *Saul*, that thoſe wicked enemies of his, which caſt him out from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord, did as good as bid him; Goe ſerue other Gods, yet now is he gone from the inheritance of God, into the land of the Philiſtims; That *Saul* might ſeeke him no more, hee hides himſelfe out of the liſts of the Church, where a good man would not looke for him: Once before had *Dauid* fled to this *Achiſh*, when hee was glad to ſcrabble on the doores, and let his ſpittle fal vpon his beard, in a ſemblance of madneſſe, that he might eſcape, yet now in a ſemblance of friendſhip, is hee returned

returned to ſaue that life, which he was in danger to haue loſt in Iſrael; *Goliah* the Champion of the Philiſtims, whom *Dauid* ſlew, was of Gath; yet *Dauid* dwells with *Achiſh* King of the Philiſtims in Gath; Euen amongſt them whoſe fore-skins he had preſented to *Saul*, by two hundreds at once, doth *Dauid* chooſe to reſide for ſafety: Howſoeuer it was a weakeneſſe in *Dauid*, thus by his league of amity to ſtrengthen the enemies of God, yet doth not God take aduantage of it for his ouerthrow, but giues him protection, euen where his preſence offended; and giues him fauour where himſelfe bore iuſt hatred;

hatred; Oh the infinite patience and mercy of our God, who doth good to vs for our euill, and in the very act of our prouocation vpholdeth, yea, bleſſeth vs with preſeruation.

Could *Saul* haue rightly conſidered it, hee had found it no ſmall loſſe and impairing to his kingdome, that ſo valiant a Captaine, attended with ſixe hundred able ſoldiers, and their families ſhould forſake his land, and ioyne with his enemies; yet he is not quiet till he haue abandoned his owne ſtrength: The world hath none ſo great enemy to a wicked man, as himſelfe; his hands cannot be held from his owne miſchiefe; hee

will needs make his friends, enemies; his enemies, victors; himselfe, miserable.

DAVID was too wise, to cast himselfe into the hands of a Philistim King, without assurance; What assurance could hee haue but promises? Those, *Dauid* had from *Saul* abundantly, and trusted them not; Hee dares trust the fidelity of a Pagan, hee dares not trust the vowes of a King of Israel; There may bee fidelity without the Church, and falshood within: It need not bee any newes to finde some Turks true, and some Christians faithlesse.

EVEN vnwise men are taught by experience, how much

much more they, who haue wit to learne without it? *Dauid* had well found, what it was to liue in a Court; He therfore, whom enuy droue from the Court of Iſrael, voluntarily declines the Philiſtim Court; and ſues for a country-habitation; It had not beene poſſible for ſo noted a ſtranger, after ſo much Philiſtim-bloud ſhed, to liue long in ſuch eminency, amongſt the preaſe of thoſe, whoſe ſons, or brothers, or fathers, or allies, he had ſlaughtered, without ſome perilous machination of his ruine; therfore he makes ſuit for an earely remoue: (For why ſhould thy ſeruant dwell in the cheefe City of the Kingdome

with thee?) Thoſe that would ſtand ſure, muſt not affect too much height, or conſpicuity; The tall Cedars are moſt ſubiect to winds and lightnings, whiles the ſhrubs of the valleyes ſtand vnmooued; Much greatneſſe doth but make a fairer marke for euill; There is true firmneſſe and ſafety in mediocrity.

How rarely is it ſeene, that a man loſeth by his modeſty? The change fell out well to *Dauid* of Ziklag, for Gath; Now he hath a City of his owne; All Iſrael, where he was anoynted, afforded him not ſo much poſſeſſion: Now the City, which was anciently aſſigned to Iudah, returnes to the iuſt Owner; and

is

is by this meanes entayled to the Crowne of *Dauids* Succeſſours. Beſides, that now might *Dauid* liue out of the ſight, and hearing of the Philiſtim Idolatries, and enioy God no leſſe in the wals of a Philiſtim-City, then in an Iſraelitiſh wilderneſſe; withall, an happy opportunity was now opened to his friends of Iſrael, to reſort vnto his ayd; the heads of the thouſands that were of *Manaſſeh*, and many valiant Captaines of the other Tribes, fell dayly to him, and raiſed his ſix hundred followers to an army; like the Hoſt of God. The deſerts of Iſrael could neuer haue yeelded *Dauid* ſo great an aduantage: That

God, whose the earth is, makes room for his own euery-where; and oft-times prouideth them a forraine home, more kindely then the natiue; It is no matter for change of our soyle, so wee change not our God; If we can euery-where acknowledge him, hee will no where bee wanting to vs.

It was not for Gods Champion to be idle; no sooner is he free from *Sauls* sword, then hee begins an offensiue war against the Amalekites, Girzites, Geshurites; Hee knew these Nations branded by God to destruction; neither could his increasing army be maintained with a little; By one act therefore, he both reuenges

uenges for God, and prouides for his Hoſt. Had it not beene for that old quarrell, which God had with this people, *Dauid* could not be excuſed from a bloudy cruelty, in killing whole Countries, onely for the benefit of the ſpoyle: Now his Souldiers were at once, Gods Executioners, and their owne Forragers. The interuention of a command from the Almighty, alters the ſtate of any act; and makes that worthy of praiſe, which els were no better then damnable. It is now Iuſtice, which were otherwiſe murder; The will of God is the rule of good; what neede we enquire into other reaſons,

of any act or determination, when wee heare it comes from Heauen?

How many hundred yeeres had this brood of Cananites liued securely in their Country; since God commanded them to bee rooted out, and now promised themselues the certaineſt peace? The Philiſtims were their friends, if not their Lords; The Iſraelites had their hands full, neither did they know any grudge betwixt them and their neighbours, when ſuddenly the ſword of *Dauid* cuts them off, and leaues none aliue to tell the newes.

THERE is no ſafety in protraction; with men, delay cauſeth

ſeth forgetfulneſſe, or abates the force of anger; as all violent motions are weakeſt at the furtheſt; but with him, to whom all times are preſent, what can be gained by prorogation? Alas, what can it preuaile any of the curſed ſeed of Canaan, that they haue made a truce with Heauen, and a league with Hell? Their day is comming, and is not the further off, becauſe they expect it not.

MISERABLE were the ſtraits of *Dauid*; while he was driuen, not onely to maintaine his army by ſpoyle, but to colour his ſpoyle by a ſinfull diſſimulation; He tels *Achiſh*, that he had beene rouing againſt the South of

of Iudah, and the South of the Ierahmelites, and the South of the Kenites; either falsely, or doubtfully, so as hee meant to deceiue him, vnder whom hee liued, and by whom hee was trusted: If *Achish* were a Philistim, yet hee was *Dauids* frend, yea his Patron; and if hee had beene neither, it had not becomne *Dauid* to bee false. The infirmities of Gods children neuer appeare, but in their extremities. It is hard for the best man, to say, how far he will bee tempted. If a man wil put himselfe among Philistims, hee cannot promise to come forth innocent.

How easily doe we beleeue that

that which we wiſh; The more credit *Achiſh* giues vnto *Dauid*, the more ſin it was to deceiue him. And now the conceit of this ingagement, procures him a further ſeruice. The Philiſtims are aſſembled to fight with Iſrael; *Achiſh* dares truſt *Dauid* on his ſide; yea, to keepe his head for euer; neither can *Dauid* do any leſſe then promiſe his ayd againſt his owne fleſh: Neuer was *Dauid*, in all his life, driuen to ſo hard an exigent: neuer was hee ſo extremely perplexed; For what ſhould he do now? To fight with *Achiſh*, he was tyed by promiſe, by merit; Not to fight againſt Iſrael, hee was tyed by his calling, by his vnction;

vnction; Not to fight for *Achish*, were to bee vnthankfull: To fight against Israel, were to be vnnaturall; Oh what an inward battle must *Dauid* needes haue in his breſt, when he thinkes of this battle of Israel, and the Philiſtims; How doth he wiſh now, that hee had rather ſtood to the hazard of *Sauls* perſecution, then to haue put himſelfe vpon the fauour of *Achiſh*; He muſt fight on one ſide, and on whether ſide ſoeuer hee ſhould fight, he could not auoyd to be treacherous; a condition worſe then death, to an honeſt heart; which way hee would haue reſolued, if it had comne to the execution, who can know, ſince him-

himſelfe was doubtfull? either courſe had beene no better then deſperate. How could the Iſraelites euer haue receiued him for their King, who in the open field, had fought againſt them? And contrarily, if hee would haue fought againſt his frend, for his enemy; againſt *Achiſh* for *Saul*, he was now inuironed with jealous Philiſtims; and might rather looke for the puniſhment of his treaſon, then the glory of a victory.

His heart had led him into theſe ſtraits; the Lord findes a way to lead him out: The ſuggeſtions of his enemies do herein befrend him; The Princes of the Philiſtims (whether of enuy,

uy, or ſuſpition) plead for *Dauid* diſmiſſion, (*Send this fellow back that he may goe againe to his place which thou haſt appoynted him, and let him not goe downe to the battle, leſt he be an aduerſary to vs.*) No aduocate could haue ſaid more, himſelfe durſt not haue ſayd ſo much. Oh the wiſdome, and goodneſſe of our God, that can raiſe vp an aduerſary to deliuer out of thoſe euils, which our frends cannot; That by the ſword of an enemy, can let out that apoſtume, which no Phyſician could tell how to cure: It would be wide with vs ſometimes, if it were not for others malice.

There could not bee a more

juſt

juſt queſtion, then this of the Philiſtim Princes, *What doe theſe Hebrewes here?* An Iſraelite is out of his element, when he is in an army of Philiſtims: The true ſeruants of God are in their due places, when they are in oppoſition to his enemies. Profeſſion of hoſtility becomes them better then leagues of amity.

YET *Achiſh* likes *Dauids* conuerſation and preſence ſo well, that he profeſſeth himſelfe pleaſed with him, as with an Angell of God; How ſtrange it is to heare, that a Philiſtim ſhould delight in that holy man, whom an Iſraelite abhors, and ſhould be loth to be quit of *Dauid*, whom *Saul* hath expelled.

Termes

Termes of ciuility be equally o
pen to all religions, to all pro-
fessions: The common grace
of Gods children, are able to
attract loue from the most ob-
stinate enemies of goodnesse.
If we affect them for by-respects
of valour, wisdome, discourse,
wit, it is their praise, not ours;
But if for diuine grace and reli-
gion, it is our praise with theirs.

SVCH now was *Dauids* con-
dition, that hee must plead for
that he feared, and argue against
that which hee desired: (*What
haue I done? and what hast thou
found in thy seruant, that I may not
goe, and fight against the enemies of
my Lord the King?*) Neuer any
newes could bee more cordiall

to

to him then this, of his diſmiſſi-
on; yet muſt he ſeeme to ſtriue
againſt it, with an importunate
profeſſion of his forwardneſſe
to that act, which hee moſt de-
teſted.

One degree of diſſimulation
drawes on another; thoſe which
haue once giuen way to a faulty
courſe, cannot eaſily, either ſtop
or turne backe; but are in a ſort
forced to ſecond their ill begin-
nings, with worſe proceedings.
It is a dangerous and miſerable
thing, to caſt our ſelues into
thoſe actions, which draw with
them a neceſſity, either of offen-
ding, or miſcarriage.

Saul and the Witch of Endor.

EVEN the worſt men may ſomtimes make head againſt ſome ſinnes. *Saul* hath expelled the Sorcerers out of the land of Iſrael; and hath forbidden magicke vpon paine of death. He that had no care to expell Satan out of his owne heart, yet will ſeeme to driue him out of his kingdome. That wee ſee wicked men oppoſe themſelues to ſome ſinnes, there

there is neither maruell, nor comfort in it: No doubt Satan made sport at this edict of *Saul*; what cares he to be banished in sorcery, whiles he is entertained in malice? He knew and found *Saul* his; whiles he resisted; and smiled to yeeld thus farre vnto his vassall: if wee quit not all sinnes, he will be content wee should, either abandon or persecute some.

Where is no place for holy feare, there will be place for the seruile; The graceless heart of *Saul* was astonied at the Philistims; yet was neuer moued at the frowns of that God, whose anger sent them, nor of those sinnes of his, which procured

them. Thoſe that cannot feare for loue, ſhall tremble for feare: and how much better is awe then terror? preuention then confuſion? There is nothing more lamentable to ſee a man laugh when hee ſhould feare; God ſhall laugh when ſuch a ones feare commeth:

Extremiry of diſtreſſe, will ſend euen the prophaneſt man to God; like as the drowning man, reacheth out his hand to that bow, which he contemned whiles hee ſtood ſafe on the banke; *Saul* now asketh counſell of the Lord; whoſe Prophet he hated, whoſe prieſts he ſlue, whoſe anoynted he perſecutes; Had *Saul* conſulted with God when

when he ſhould, this euill had not beene; but now, if this euill had not beene; he had conſulted with God; The thanke of this act is due, not him, but to his affection; A forced piety is thankeleſſe, and vnprofitable; God will not anſwere him neither by dreames, nor by vrim, nor by Prophets. Why ſhould God anſwer, that man by dreames, who had reſiſted him waking? Why ſhould he anſwer him by vrim, that had ſlaine his Prieſts? Why ſhould he anſwer him by Prophets, who hated the Father of the Prophets; rebelled againſt the word of the Prophets?

It is an vnreaſonable vne-

quality to hope to finde God at our command, when wee would not be at his; To looke that God ſhould regard our voyce in trouble, when wee would not regard his, in peace.

Vnto what mad ſhiftes are men driuen by deſpaire? If God will not anſwer, Satan ſhall; (*Saul* ſaid to his ſeruants, ſeeke me a woman that hath a familiar ſpirit) If *Saul* had not known this courſe Diueliſh, why did he decree to baniſh it, to mulct it with death? yet now againſt the ſtreame of his conſcience, he will ſeeke to thoſe whom he had condemned; There needs no other iudge of *Sauls* act then himſelfe; had hee not before

oppoſed

oppoſed this ſinne, he had not ſo haynouſly ſinned in committing it; There cannot bee a more fearefull ſigne of an heart giuen vp to a reprobate ſence, then to caſt it ſelfe wilfully into thoſe ſinnes, which it hath proclaimed to deteſt. The declinations to euill are many times inſenſible, but when it breakes forth into ſuch apparant effects, euen others eies may diſcerne it; What was *Saul* the better to fore-know the iſſue of his approaching battaile? If this conſultation could haue ſtrengthned him againſt his enemies, or promoted his victory, there might haue bene ſome colour for ſo foule an act; Now, what

could hee gaine, but the ſatiſfying of his bootleſſe curioſity, in fore-ſeeing that, which hee ſhould not be able to auoyd?

Fooliſh men giue a way their ſoules for nothing; The itch of impertinent and vnprofitable knowledge, hath beene the heriditary diſtroyer of the ſonnes of *Adam* and *Eue*; How many haue periſhed to know that which hath procured their periſhing? How ambitious ſhould wee bee to know thoſe things, the knowledge wherof is eternall life.

Many a leud office are they put to, which ſerue wicked maſters; one while *Sauls* ſeruants are ſet to kill innocent *Danid*; another

another while, to ſhed the blood of Gods Prieſts; and now they muſt goe ſeeke for a Witch: It is no ſmall happineſſe to attend them, from whom we may receiue precepts and examples of vertue.

Had *Saul* bene good, he had needed no diſguiſe; Honeſt actions neuer ſhame the doers; Now that hee goeth about a ſinfull buſineſſe, hee changeth himſelfe; he ſeekes the ſhelter of the night, he takes but two followers with him; It is true, that if *Saul* had comne in the port of a King, the Witch had as much diſſembled her condition, as now he diſſembleth his; yet it was not only deſire to ſpeed,

speed, but guiltinesse that thus altred his habit; such is the power of conscience, that euen those who are most affected to euill, yet are ashamed to bee thought such as they desire to be.

Saul needed another face to fit that tongue, which should say (Coniecture to me by the familiar spirit, and bring me vp whom I shall name vnto thee;) An obdurate heart can giue way to any thing:

Notwithstanding, the peremptory edict of *Saul*, there are still Witches in Israel: Neither good lawes nor carefull executions, can purge the Church from Malefactors; There will still be some that will ieopard their

their heads vpon the groſſeſt ſins; No garden can bee ſo curiouſly tended, that there ſhould not be one weed left in it. Yet ſo farre can good ſtatutes, and due inflictions of puniſhment vpon offenders, preuaile that miſcheeuous perſons are glad to pull in their heads; and dare not doe ill, but in diſguiſe and darkneſſe. It is no ſmall aduantage of Iuſtice, that it affrights ſin, if it cannot be expelled; As contrarily, wofull is the condition of that place, where is a publique profeſſion of wickedneſſe.

This Witch was no leſſe crafty then wicked; ſhe had before (as is like) bribed Officers to eſcape

escape inditement, lurke in secrecy; and now shee will not worke her feats without security; her suspition proiects the worst; (*Wherefore seekest thou to take me in a snare, to cause me to dye?*) Oh vaine Sorceresse, that could bee wary to auoyd the punishment of *Saul*, careless to auoyd the judgement of God; Could wee fore-thinke what our sinne would cost vs, we durst not, but bee innocent: This is a good and seasonable answer for vs, to make vnto Satan, when he solicites vs to euill (*Wherefore seekest thou to take me in a snare, to cause me to dye?*) Nothing is more sure then this intention in the tempter, then this euent in the issue;

issue; Oh that we could but so much feare the eternall paines, as wee doe the temporary, and bee but so carefull to saue our soules from torment, as our bodies.

No sooner hath *Saul* sworne her safety, then shee addresseth her to her sorcery; Hope of impunity drawes on sinne with boldnesse; were it not for the delusions of false promises, Satan should haue no Clients. Could *Saul* be so ignorant, as to thinke that Magick had power ouer Gods deceased Saints, to raise them vp; yea, to call them downe from their rest? Time was, when *Saul* was among the Prophets. And yet now, that he

he is in the impure lodg of Diuels, how senceleſſe he is, to ſay, *Bring me vp Samuel?* It is no rare thing, to loſe euen our wit and judgement together with graces; How juſtly are they giuen ouer to ſottiſhneſſe, that haue giuen themſelues ouer to ſin?

The Sorcereſſe (it ſeemes) exerciſing her coniurations in a roome apart, is informed by her Familiar, who it was that ſet her on worke; ſhee can therefore finde time, in the midſt of her exorciſmes, to binde the aſſurance of her owne ſafety, by expoſtulation, *Shee cryed with a loud voyce, Why haſt thou deceiued mee, for thou art Saul,*) The very name of *Saul* was an accuſation; Yet

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is hee ſo far from ſtriking his breſt, that doubting leſt this feare of the Witch, ſhould interrupt the deſired worke, hee encourages her, whom he ſhould haue condemned; (*Be not afraid*;) He that had more cauſe to feare, for his owne ſake, in an expectation of juſt judgement, cheeres vp her, that feared nothing but himſelfe: How ill doth it become vs, to giue that counſell to others, whereof wee haue more need and vſe in our owne perſons?

As one that had more care to ſatisfie his curioſity, then her ſuſpicion, he asks, *What ſaweſt thou?* Who would not haue looked, that *Sauls* haire ſhould haue ſtared

red on his head, to heare of a ſpirit raiſed? His ſinne hath ſo hardened him, that hee rather pleaſes himſelfe in it, which hath nothing in it but horror; So far is Satan content to deſcend to the ſeruice of his ſeruants, that he will approue his fained obedience to their very outward ſences; What forme is ſo glorious, that hee either cannot, or dare not vndertake? Here Gods aſcend out of the earth; Elſewhere Satan transformes him into an Angell of light; What wonder is it, that his wicked Inſtruments appeare like Saints in their hypocriticall diſſimulation? If wee will bee iudging by the appearance, we ſhall be ſure

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to erre: No eie could distinguish betwixt the true *Samuel*, and a false spirit. *Saul*, who was well worthy to bee deceiued, seeing those gray haires, and that mantle, inclines himselfe to the ground, and bowes himselfe; Hee that would not worship God in *Samuel* aliue, now worships *Samuel* in Satan; and no meruel; Satan was now become his refuge in stead of God; his *Vrim* was darknesse, his Prophet a Ghost: Euery one that consults with Satan, worships him, though hee bow not, neither doth that euill spirit desire any other reuerence, then to bee sought to.

How cunningly doth Satan

reſemble, not onely the habit and geſture, but the language of *Samuel*, *Wherefore haſt thou diſquieted me, and wherefore doeſt thou aske of mee, ſeeing the Lord is gone from thee, and is thine enemy?* Nothin is more pleaſing to that euill one, then to be ſolicited, yet in the perſon of *Samuel*, hee can ſay, *Why haſt thou diſquieted mee?* Had not the Lord beene gone from *Saul*, he had neuer comne to the diuelliſh Oracle of Endor, and yet the counterfetting ſpirit can ſay, *Why doſt thou aske of mee, ſeeing the Lord is gone from thee?* Satan cares not how little he is knowne to bee himſelfe; hee loues to paſſe vnder any forme, rather then his owne.

The

The more holy the perſon is, the more carefully doth Satan act him, that by his ſtale he may enſnare vs. In euery motion it is good to try the ſpirits, whether they bee of God; Good words are no meanes, to diſtinguiſh a Prophet from a Deuill; *Samuel* himſelfe, whiles hee was aliue, could not haue ſpoken more grauely, more ſeuerely, more diuinely, then this euill Ghoſt, *For the Lord will rent thy Kingdome out of thy hand, and giue it thy neighbour Dauid, becauſe thou obeyedſt not the voyce of the Lord, nor executedſt his fierce wrath vpon the Amalekites, therefore hath the Lord done this vnto thee this day*: When the Diuell himſelfe puts on grauity and re-

ligion, who can maruell at the hypocrisie of men? Well may lewd men bee good Preachers, when Satan himselfe can play the Prophet; Where are those Ignorants, that thinke charitably of charmes and spels, because they finde nothing in them, but good words? What Prophet could speake better words, then this Diuell in *Samuels* mantle? Neither is there at any time so much danger of that wicked spirit, as when hee speakes best.

I could wonder to heare Satan preach thus prophetically, if I did not know, that as he was once a good Angell, so hee can still act what hee was; Whiles

Saul

Saul was in consultation of sparing *Agag*, we shall neuer finde that Satan would lay any block in his way; Yea, then he was a prompt Orator, to induce him into that sin; now that it is past & gone; he can lade *Saul* with fearfull denunciations of judgment; Till wee haue sinn'd, Satan is a Parasite, when wee haue sinn'd, hee is a Tyrant: What cares hee to flatter any more, when hee hath what hee would? Now his onely worke is to terrifie, and confound, that hee may enioy what hee hath won; How much better is it seruing that Master, who when wee are most deiected with the conscience of euill, heartens

vs with inward comfort, and
ſpeakes peace to the ſoule,
in the midſt of
tumult?

Ziglag

Ziglag ſpoyled and reuenged.

HAD not the King of the Philiſtims ſent *Dauid* away earely, his wiues, & his people and ſubſtance, which he left at Ziglag had beene vtterly loſt; Now *Achiſh* did not more pleaſure *Dauid* in his intertainment, then in his diſmiſſion. *Saul* was not *Dauids* enemy more in the perſecution of his perſon, then in the forbearance

of God enemies; Behold, thus late doth *Dauid* feele the ſmart of *Sauls* ſin, in ſparing the Amalekites; who, if Gods ſentence had beene duely executed, had not now ſuruiued, to annoy this parcell of Iſrael.

As in ſpirituall reſpects, our ſins are alwayes hurtfull to our ſelues, ſo in temporall, oft-times preiudiciall to poſterity; A wicked man deſerues ill of thoſe, he neuer liued to ſee.

I cannot maruell at the Amalekites aſſault made vpon the Iſraelites of Ziglag; I cannot but maruell at their clemency; how juſt it was, that while *Dauid* would giue ayd to the enemies of the Church, againſt Iſrael;

rael; the enemies of the Church ſhould riſe againſt *Dauid*, in his peculiar charge of Iſrael: But whilſt *Dauid*, rouing againſt the Amalekites, not many dayes before, left neither man nor woman aliue, how ſtrange is it, that the Amalekites inuading and ſurprizing Ziglag (in reuenge) kill neither man nor woman? Shal we ſay that mercy is fled from the breſts of Iſraelites, and reſts in heathens? Or ſhall wee rather aſcribe this to the gracious reſtraint of God, who hauing deſigned *Amalek* to the ſlaughter of Iſrael, and not Iſrael to the ſlaughter of *Amalek*, moued the hand of Iſrael, and held the hands of *Amalek*;

This

This was that alone, that made the heathens take vp with an vn-bloody reuenge; burning only the walls, and leading away the persons. Israel crossed the reuealed will of God, in sparing *Amalek*; *Amalek* fulfills the secret will of God in sparing Israel.

It was still the lot of *Amalek*, to take Israel at all aduantages; vpon their first cóming out of Ægypt, when they were weary, weake, and vnarmed, then did *Amalek* assault them: And now, when one part of Israel was in the field against the Philistims, another was gone with the Philistims against Israel; the *Amalekites* set vpon the coasts of both;

both; and goes away laded with the ſpoyle: No other is to be exſpected of our ſpirituall aduerſaries, who are euer readieſt to aſſayle, when we are the vnreadieſt to defend.

It was a wofull ſpectacle for *Dauid* and his Souldiers, vpon their returne to finde ruines and aſhes in ſteed of houſes, and in ſteed of their families, ſolitude; Their citie was vaniſhed into ſmoake, their houſholds into captiuity; neither could they know whom to accuſe, or where to enquire for redreſſe; whiles they made account that their home ſhould recompence their tedious journey with comfort, the miſerable deſolation

tion of their home doubles the discomfort of their journey; what remained there but teares and lamentations? They lifted vp their voices, and wept, till they could weepe no more. Heere was plenty of nothing but misery and sorow. The heart of euery Israelite was brim-full of griefe; *Dauids* ran ouer; for besides that his crosse was the same with theirs, all theirs was his alone; each man lookt on his fellow as a partner of affliction, but euery one lookt vpon *Dauid* as the cause of all their affliction; and (as common displeasure is neuer but fruitfull of reuenge) they all agree to stone him as the author

auther of their vndoing, whom they followed all this while, as the hopefull meanes of their aduancements.

Now *Dauids* losse is his least griefe; neither (as if euery thing had conspired to torment him) can he looke besides the aggrauation of his sorrow and danger; *Saul* and his souldiers had hunted him out of Israel; the Philistim Courtiers had hunted him from the fauour of *Achish*; the Amalekites spoyled him in Ziglag; yet all these are easie aduersaries in comparison of his owne; his owne followers are so farre from pittying his participation of the losse, that they are ready to kill him, be-

cause

cause they are miserable with him. Oh the many and grieuous perplexities of the man after Gods owne heart; If all his traine had ioyned their best helpes for the mitigation of his griefe, their cordials had beene too weake, but now the vexation that arises from their fury, and malice, drowneth the sense of their losse, and were enough to distract the most resolute heart; why should it be strange to vs, that we meete with hard tryals, when wee see the deare anoynted of God thus plunged into euils?

What should the distressed Son of *Ishai* now doe? whether should he thinke to turne him?

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to goe backe to Israel hee durst not; to goe to *Achish* he might not; to abide amongst those waste heapes he could not; or if there might haue beene harbor in those burnt walls, yet there could bee no safety to remaine with those mutinous spirits. (But *Dauid* comforted himselfe in the Lord his God;) oh happy and sure refuge of a faithfull Soule; The earth yeelded him nothing, but matter of disconsolation, and heauines; he lifts his eyes aboue the hills, whence commeth his saluation; It is no meruaile that God remembred *Dauid* in all his troubles; Since *Dauid* in all his troubles, did thus remember his

his God; hee knew that though no mortall eye of reason, or sense could discerne any euasion from these intricate euils, yet that the eye of diuine prouidence had descryed it long before; and that though no humane power could make way for his safety, yet that the ouerruling hand of his God, could doe it with ease; His experience had assured him of the fidelity of his Guardian in heauen; and therfore he comforted himselfe in the Lord his God.

In uaine is comfort expected from God, if wee consult not with him. *Abiathar* the Priest is called for; *Dauid* was not in the court of *Achish*, without the Priest

Prieſt by his ſide; nor the Prieſt without the Ephod; Had theſe beene left behinde in Ziglag, they had beene miſcarried with the reſt, and *Dauid* had now beene hopeleſſe. How well it ſucceedes to the great, when they take God with them in his Miniſters, in his ordinances? As contrarily, when theſe are layd by, as ſuperfluous, there can be nothing but vncertainty of ſucceſſe, or certainty of miſcheefe. The preſence of the Prieſt and Ephod, would haue little auailed him without their vſe; by them he askes counſell of the Lord in theſe ſtraits. The mouth and eares of God, which were ſhut vnto *Saul*, are open

vnto *Saul*, are open vnto *Dauid*; no ſooner can he aske, then hee receiues anſwer; and the anſwer that he receiues is full of courage and comfort. (*Follow, for thou ſhalt ſurely ouertake them, and recouer all*) That God of truth, neuer diſappoynted any mans truſt. *Dauid* now findes, that the eye which waited vpon God, was not ſent away weeping.

Dauid therfore, and his men, are now vpon their march after the Amalekite: It is no lingring, when God bids vs goe; They which had promiſed reſt to their weary limbs, after their returne from *Achiſh*, in their harbour of Ziglag, are glad to forget their hopes, and to put their ſtiffe joynts

joynts vnto a new taske of motion; It is no maruell, if two hundred of them were so ouertyred, with their former toyle, that they were not able to passe ouer the riuer Besor. *Dauid* was a true type of Christ. We follow him in these holy wars, against the spirituall Amalekites. All of vs are not of an equall strength; Some are carried by the vigour of their faith, through all difficulties; Others, after long pressure, are ready to languish in the way; Our Leader is not more strong then pittifull; neither doth hee scornfully cashier those, whose desires are hearty, whiles their abilities are vnanswerable; How much more

ſhould our charity pardon the infirmities of our brethen; and allow them to ſit by the ſtuffe, who cannot endure the march?

The ſame Prouidence, which appoynted *Dauid* to follow the Amalekites; had alſo ordered an Ægyptian to be caſt behinde them. This caſt ſeruant, whom his cruell Maſter, had left to faintneſſe and famine, ſhall bee vſed as the meanes of the recouery of the Iſraelites loſſe; and of the reuenge of the Amalekites. Had not his Maſter neglected him, all theſe rouers of Amalek, had gone away with their life and booty; It is not ſafe to deſpiſe the meaneſt vaſſal

vpon

vpon earth. There is a mercy and care due to the moſt deſpicable peice of all humanity; wherein wee cannot bee wanting without the offence, without the puniſhment of God.

Charity diſtinguiſheth an Iſraelite from an Amalekite. *Dauids* followers are ſtrangers to this Ægyptian; an Amalekite was his Maſter; His Maſter leaues him to dye (in the field) of ſickneſſe and hunger; theſe ſtrangers releeued him: and ere they know, whether they might by him receiue any light in their purſuit, they refreſh his dying ſpirits with bread and water, with figs and raiſins; Neither can the haſte of their way bee

any hindrance to their compaſſion; Hee hath no Iſraelitiſh blood in him, that is vtterly mercileſſe; Perhaps, yet *Dauids* Followers might alſo, in the hope of ſome intelligence, ſhew kindneſſe to this forlorne Ægyptian. Worldly wiſdome teacheth vs, to ſow ſmall courteſies, where we may reape large haruefts of recompence: No ſooner are his ſpirits recalled, then hee requites his food with information. I cannot blame the Ægyptian, that hee was ſo eaſily induced, to deſcry theſe vnkind Amalekites, to merciful Iſraelites; thoſe that gaue him ouer vnto death, to the reſtorers of his life; much leſſe, that ere he

he would deſcry them; hee requires an oath of ſecurity, from ſo bad a Maſter; Well doth hee match death with ſuch a ſeruitude; Wonderfull is the Prouidence of God; euen ouer thoſe, which are not in the neereſt bonds, his owne; Three dayes, and three nights, had this poore Ægyptian Slaue lyen ſicke and hunger-ſtarued in the fields, and lookes for nothing but death, when God ſends him ſuccour from the hands of thoſe Iſraelites, whom hee had helped to ſpoile; though not ſo much for his ſake, as for Iſraels, is this heatheniſh Stragler preſerued.

It pleaſes God, to extend his common fauors to all his crea-

tures; but in miraculous preſeruations, he hath ſtill wont to haue reſpect to his owne. By this means therfore, are the Iſraelites brought to the ſight of their late ſpoylers, whom they finde ſcattered abroad, vpon all the earth, eating, and drinking, and dancing in triumph, for the great prey they had taken.

It was three dayes at leaſt, ſince this gainefull forraging of Amalek; and now, ſeeing no feare of any Purſuer, and promiſing themſelues ſafety, in ſo great and vntraced a diſtance, they make themſelues merry with ſo rich and eaſie a victory; and now ſuddenly, when they began to think of enioying the beauty

beauty and wealth they had gotten; the ſword of *Dauid* was vpon their throats. Deſtruction is neuer neere, then when ſecurity hath chaſed away feare. With how ſad faces and hearts, had the wiues of *Dauid*, and the other Captiues of Iſrael, looked vpon the triumphall reuels of Amalek; and what a change, do we thinke, appeared in them, when they ſaw their happy and ualiant Reſcuers, flying in vpon their inſolent Victors, and making the death of the Amalekites, the ranſome of their captiuity; They mourned euen now at the dances of Amalek; now in the ſhriekes and death of Amalek, they ſhout and reioyce;

ſecurity

ioyce; The mercy of our God forgets not to enterchange our ſorrowes with ioy, and the ioy of the wicked with ſorrow.

The Amalekites haue paid a deare lone for the goods of Iſrael, which they now reſtore with their owne liues; and now their ſpoyle hath made *Dauid* richer then he expected; that booty which they had ſwept from all other parts accrewed to him.

Thoſe Iſralites that could not goe on to fight for their ſhare, are comne to meete their brethren with gratulation. How partiall are wee wont to be vnto our owne cauſes? Euen very Iſraelites will bee ready to fall out for matter of profit: where ſelfe-

elfe-loue hath bred a quarrell, euery man is ſubiect to flatter his owne caſe. It ſeemed plauſible, and but iuſt to the actors in this reſcue, that thoſe which had taken no part in the paine, and hazard of the journey, ſhould receiue no part of the commodity. It was fauour enough for them to recouer their wiues & children, though they ſhared not in the goods. Wiſe and holy *Dauid* (whoſe praiſe was no leſſe, to ouercome his owne in time of peace, then his enimies in warre) calls his contending followers from law to equity, and ſo orders the matter, that ſince the plaintifes were detained not by will, but by

by neceſſity; and ſince their forced ſtay, was vſe-full in garding the ſtuffe, they ſhould partake equally of the prey with their fellowes. A ſentence well-beſeeming the juſtice of God anoynted. Thoſe that repreſent God vpon earth, ſhould reſemble him in their proceeding. It is the juſt mercy of our God, to meaſure vs by our wills not by our abilities; to recompence vs gratiouſly, according to the truth of our deſires, and endeauors; and to account that performed by vs, which hee only letteth vs from performing. It were wide with vs, if ſomtime purpoſe did not ſupply actions. Whiles our heart faulteth not, wee

we that through ſpirituall ſick-
neſſe are faine to abide by
the ſtuffe, ſhall ſhare
both in grace and
glory with the
victors.

The

The death of Saul.

THe Witch of Endor had halfe slaine *Saul* before the battell. It is iust, that they who consult with deuils, should goe away with discomfort: He hath eaten his last bread, at the hand of a Sorceresse: and now necessitie drawes him into that field, where he sees nothing but despaire. Had not *Saul* beleeued the ill newes of the counterfait *Samuel*, he had not beene strooke downe on the ground with words

words: Now his beleefe made him desperate; Those actions which are not sustained by hope, must needs languish: and are only promoted by outward compulsion: Whiles the minde is vncertaine of successe, it relieues it selfe with the possibilities of good: in doubts there is a comfortable mixture: but when it is assured of the worst euent, it is vtterly discouraged, and deiected. It hath therefore pleased the wisdome of God to hide from wicked men, his determination of their finall estate, that their remainders of hope, may harten them to good;

In all likelyhood on selfe-

same

ſame day, ſaw *Dauid* a victor
uer the Amalakites, and *Sa*
diſcomfited by the Philiſtims
How ſhould it bee otherwiſe
Dauid conſulted with God, an
preuailed; *Saul* with the Witc
of Endor and periſheth; Th
end is commonly anſwerabl
to the way; It is an idle iniuſtic
when we do ill to look to ſpee
well. The ſlaughter of *Saul* an
his ſonnes, was not in the firſt
ſcene of this Tragicall field
that was rather reſerued b
God, for the laſt act, that *Saul*
meaſure might be full: God i
long ere he ſtrikes, but whe
he doth, it is to purpoſe; Firſt
Iſrael flees and falls down
wounded in mount Gilboa
The

They had their part in *Sauls* ſinne: they were actors in *Dauids* perſecution: Iuſtly therfore doe they ſuffer with him, whom they had ſeconded in offence. As it is hard to be good vnder an euill Prince, ſo it is as rare, not to be enwrapped in his iudgements: It was no ſmall addition to the anguiſh of *Sauls* death, to ſee his ſonnes dead, to ſee his people fleeing, and ſlaine before him; They had ſinned in their King, and in them is their King puniſhed. The reſt were not ſo worthy of pittie; but whoſe heart would it not touch to ſee *Ionathan*, the good Sonne of a wicked Father, inuolued in the common deſtruction.

ction. Death is not partiall: All diſpoſitions, all merits are alike to it: If valour, if holines, if ſyncerity of heart could haue beene any defence againſt mortality, *Ionathan* had ſuruiued; Now by their wounds and death, no man can diſcerne which is *Ionathan*; The ſoule only findes the difference, which the body admitteth not; Death is the cómon gate both to heauen and hell; we all paſſe that, ere our turning to either hand: The ſword of the Philiſtims, fetcheth *Ionathan* through it with his fellowes: no ſooner is his foot ouer that threſhold, then God conducteth him to glory: The beſt cannot bee happy

happy but through their diſſo-
lution; Now therefore hath
Ionathan no cauſe of complaint,
he is by the rude and cruel hand
of a Philiſtim, but remoued to
a better Kingdome, then hee
leaues to his brother: and at
once is his death both a tempo-
rall affliction to the Sonne of
Saul, and an entrance of glory
to the frend of *Dauid*.

The Philiſtim-archers ſhot
at random: God directs their
arrowes into the body of *Saul*;
Leaſt the diſcomfiture of his
people, and the ſlaughter of his
ſonnes ſhould not bee griefe e-
nough to him, hee feeles him-
ſelfe wounded, and ſees no-
thing before him but horror

and death; and now as a man forsaken of all hopes, hee begs of his armor-bearer that deaths-blow, which els he must (to the doubling of his indignation) receiue from a Philistim. Hee begs this bloody fauour of his seruant, and is denyed: Such an awefulnes hath God placed in soueraignty, that no intreaty, no extremity, can moue the hand against it: What mettall are those men made of, that can suggest or resolue, and attempt the violation of maiesty? Wicked men care more for the shame of the world, then the danger of their soule: Desperate *Saul* will now supply his armor-bearer; and as a man that bore armes

armes againſt himſelfe, hee falls vpon his owne ſword. What if he had dyed by the weapon of a Philiſtim? So did his Son *Ionathan*, and loſt no glory: Theſe conceites of diſreputatiou preuaile with carnall hearts aboue all ſpirituall reſpects: There is no greater murderer then vainglory: Nothing more argues an heart voyd of grace, then to be tranſported by ydle popularity into actions preiudiciall to the Soule.

Euill examples, eſpecially of the great neuer eſcaped imitation; the armour-bearer of *Saul* followes his maſter: and dares do that to himſelfe, which to his King he durſt not: as if

their owne ſwords had beene more familiar executioners, they yelded vnto them, what they grudged to their purſuers. From the beginning was *Saul* euer his owne enemy, neither did any hands hurt him but his owne: and now his death is ſutable to his life: his owne hand payes him the reward of all his wickedneſſe, The end of hypocrites, and enuious men is commonly fearefull: Now is the blood of Gods Prieſts, which *Saul* ſhed, and of *Dauid*, which he would haue ſhed, required, & requited. The euil ſpirit had ſaid the euening before, *To morrow thou ſhalt be with mee*: and now *Saul* haſteth to make the

the diuell no lyer: rather then fayle, he giues himſelfe his own mittimus: Oh the wofull extremities of a diſpayring Soule, plundging him euer into a greater miſchiefe, to auoyd the leſſe. Hee might haue beene a patient in anothers violence, and faultleſſe; now whiles hee will needs act the Philiſtims part vpon himſelfe, hee liued and dyed a murderer; The caſe is deadly, when the priſoner breakes the Iayle, and will not ſtay for his deliuery: & though wee may not paſſe ſentence vpon ſuch a Soule, yet vpon the fact we may: the Soule may poſſibly repent in the parting, the act is haynous, and ſuch as

without repentance, kills the Soule.

It was the next day, ere the Philistims knew how much they were victors; then finding the dead corpes of *Saul* and his Sonnes, they begin their triumphs: The head of King *Saul* is cut off in lieu of *Goliahs*, and now all their Idoll temples ring of their successe; Fooliſh Philistims, If they had not beene more beholden to *Sauls* sinnes, then their Gods, they had neuer carryed away the honor of those trophees: In steed of magnifying the iustice of the true God, who punished *Saul* with deserued death, they magnifie the power of the false: Super-

stit ion

ſtition is extemely iniurious to God: It is no better then theft, to aſcribe vnto the ſecond cauſes that honor which is due vnto the firſt: but to giue Gods glory to thoſe things which neither act, nor are, it is the higheſt degree of ſpirituall robbery.

Saul was none of the beſt Kings: yet ſo impatient are his ſubiects of the indignity offered to his dead corps, that they will rather leaue their owne bones amongſt the Philiſtims, then the carcaſſe of *Saul*. Such a cloſe relation there is betwixt a Prince and ſubiect, that the diſhonor of either is inſepara ble from both: How willing

ſhould

ſhould wee bee to hazard our bodyes or ſubſtance fo the vindication either of the perſon, or name of a good King, whiles he liues to the benefit of our protection: It is an vniuſt ingratitude in thoſe men, which can endure the diſgrace of them, vnder whoſe ſhelter they liue; but how vnnaturall is the villany of thoſe miſcreants, that can be content to bee actors in the capitall wrongs offred to ſoueraigne authority:

It were a wonder, if after the death of a Prince, there ſhould want ſome Pick-thanke, to inſinuate himſelfe into his Succeſſour: An Amalekite young manrides poſt to Ziklag, to find out

out *Dauid*, whom euen common rumor had notified for the anoynted heyre to the Kingdome of Israel; to bee the first messenger of that newes, which hee thought could bee no other then acceptable; the death of *Saul*: and that the tydings might be so much more meritorious, he addes to the report, what he thinkes might carry the greatest retribution: In hope of reward, or honour, the man is content to bely himselfe to *Dauid*: It was not the speare, but the sword of *Saul*, that was the instrument of his death: neither could this stranger finde *Saul*, but dying, since the Armourbearer of *Saul* saw him dead, ere he

he offred that violence to himſelfe: The hand of this Amalekite therfore was not guilty, his tongue was: Had not this meſſenger meaſur'd *Dauids* foot, by his owne laſt, hee had forborne this peece of the newes; and not hoped to aduantage himſelfe by this falſhood: Now he thinks; The tydings of a Kingdome cannot but pleaſe: None but *Saul* and *Ionathan* ſtood in *Dauids* way: Hee cannot chuſe, but like to heare of their remouall: Eſpecially, ſince *Saul* did ſo tyrannouſly perſecute his innocence. If I ſhall onely report the fact done by another, I ſhall goe away but with the recompence of a lucky Poſt; wheras, if

if I take vpon mee the action, I am the man, to whom *Dauid* is beholden for the Kingdome: he cannot but honour and requite me, as the author of his deliuerance and happineſſe. Worldly mindes thinke no man can be of any other, then their owne diet; and becauſe they finde the reſpects of ſelfe-loue, and priuate profit, ſo ſtrongly preuailing with themſelues, they cannot conceiue, how theſe ſhould bee capable of a repulſe from others.

How much was this Amalekite mocked of his hopes: whiles he imagined, that *Dauid* would now triumph, and feaſt in the aſſured expectation of the King.

Kingdome, and poſſeſſion of the Crowne of Iſrael, hee findes him renting his clothes, and wringing his hands, and weeping, and mourning: as if all his comfort had been dead with *Saul* and *Ionathan*: and yet perhaps he thought: This ſorrow of *Dauid* is but faſhionable, ſuch as great heyres make ſhew of in the fatall day they haue longed for; Theſe teares will ſoone be dry; the ſight of a Crowne will ſoon breed a ſucceſſion of other paſſions: But this error is ſoon corrected: For when *Dauid* had entertained this Bearer, with a ſad faſt all the day: he cals him forth in the euening to execution (*How waſt thou not afrayd* (ſaith he)

he) *to put forth thy hand, to destroy the Anoynted of the Lord*:) Doubtlesse, the Amalekite made many faire pleas for himselfe, out of the grounds of his owne report: Alas, *Saul* was before falne vpon his owne speare. It was but mercy to kill him, that was halfe dead, that he might die the shorter: Besides, his entreaty and importunate prayers, moued mee to hasten him, through those painfull gates of death: had I striken him as an enemy, I had deserued the blow I had giuen; now I lent him the hand of a frend: why am I punished for obeying the voyce of a King? and for perfiting what himselfe begun, and could not finish: And

And if neither his own wound, nor mine, had dispatched him, the Philistims were at his heeles, ready to doe this same act with insultation, which I did in fauour: and if my hand had not preuented them, wherehad been the Crowne of Israel, which I now haue here presented to thee: I could haue deliuered that to King *Achish*, and haue beene rewarded with honour: let mee not dye for an act well meant to thee, how euer construed by thee: But no pretence can make his owne tale not deadly. (*Thy bloud bee vpon thine owne head, for thine owne mouth hath testified against thee saying, I haue slaine the Lords Anoynted.*) It is a iust

iuſt ſuppoſition, that euery man is ſo great a Fauourer of himſelfe, that he will not miſ-report his owne actions, nor ſay the worſt of himſelfe: In matter of confeſſion, men may without iniury be taken at their words: If he did it, his fact was capitall, If he did it not, his lye: It is pitty any other recompence ſhould befall thoſe falſe flatterers, that can be content to father a ſinne, to get thankes. Euery drop of royall bloud is ſacred: For a man to ſay that he hath ſhed it, is mortall. Of how farre different ſpirits from this of *Dauid*, are thoſe men, which ſuborne the death of Princes, and celebrate and canonize the murtherers.

rers. Into their ſecret, let not my ſoule come, my glory, be thou not joyned to their aſſembly.

Abner

Abner and Joab.

HOw mercifull and ſeaſonable are the prouiſions of God? Ziglag was now nothing but ruines and aſhes: *Dauid* might returne to the ſoyle where it ſtood, to the roofes and walls he could not: No ſooner is he diſapointed of that harbour, then God prouides him Cities of Hebron: *Saul* ſhall dye to giue him elbow-roome: Now doth *Dauid* finde the comfort that his extremity

ſought in the Lord his God: Now are his clowdes for a time paſſed ouer: and the Sun breaks glorioufly forth: *Dauid* ſhall raigne after his ſufferings. So ſhall we, if we indure to the end, finde a Crowne of righteouſnes, which the Lord the righteous Iudge, ſhall giue vs at that day: But though *Dauid* well knew that his head was long before anoynted, and had heard *Saul* himſelfe confidently auouching his ſucceſſion: yet he will not ſtirre from the heapes of Ziglag, till hee haue conſulted with the Lord: It did not content him, that he had Gods warrant for the kingdome, but hee muſt haue his inſtructions for the

the taking poſſeſſion of it: How ſafe and happie is the man that is reſolued to do nothing without God? Neither will generalities of direction be ſufficient; euen particular circumſtances muſt looke for a word: ſtill is God a piller of fire, and cloude to the eye of euery Iſraelite: neither may there be any motion or ſtay but from him; That action cannot but ſucceed, which proceeds vpon ſo ſure a warrant:

God ſends him to Hebron a city of Iudah: Neither will *Dauid* goe vp thither alone, but he takes with him all his men with their whole houſholds: they ſhall take ſuch part as himſelfe:

As

As they had ſhared with him in his miſery, ſo they ſhall now in his proſperity: Neither doth he take aduantage of their late mutinye (which was yet freſh and greene) to caſhier thoſe vnthankefull, and vngracious followers; but pardoning their ſecret rebellions, he makes them partakers of his good ſucceſſe. Thus doth our heauenly leader (whom *Dauid* prefigured) take vs to raigne with him who haue ſuffered with him: paſſing by our manyfold infirmities, as if they had not beene, he remoueth vs from the land of our baniſhment, and the aſhes of our forlorne Ziklag, to the Hebron of our peace, and glory:

The

The expectation of this day must (as it did with *Dauids* soldiers) digest all our sorrows.

Neuer any calling of God was so conspicuous, as not to finde some opposites: What Israelite did not know *Dauid*, appointed by God to the succession of the kingdome? Euen the Amalekite, could carry the Crowne to him as the true owner: yet there wants not an *Abner* to resist him, and the title of an *Ishboseth* to colour his resistance: If any of *Sauls* house could haue made challenge to the Crowne, it should haue beene *Mephiboseth* the Sonne of *Ionathan*: Who, it seemes had too much of his Fathers blood

to be a competitor with *Dauid*: the queſtion is not who may claime the moſt right, but who may beſt ſerue the faction; Neither was *Iſhboſheth* any other then *Abners* ſtale: *Saul* could not haue a fitter Courtier: whether in imitation of his maſters enuy, or the ambition of ruling vnder a borrowed name, hee ſtrongly oppoſeth *Dauid*: there are thoſe who ſtriue againſt their owne hearts, to make a ſide, with whom conſcience is oppreſſed by affection: An ill quarrell once vndertaken ſhall be maintained, although with blood: Now, not ſo much the blood of *Saul*, as the ingagement of *Abner* makes the warre.

The

The Sonnes of *Zeruiah* ſtand faſt to *Dauid*: It is much, how a man placeth his firſt intereſt: If *Abner* had beene in *Ioabs* roome, when *Sauls* diſpleaſure droue *Dauid* from the Court, or *Ioab* in *Abners*, theſe actions, theſe e uents had beene changed with the perſons: It was the only happines of *Ioab* that he fell on the better ſide:

Both the Commaunders vnder *Dauid* and *Iſhboſheth* were equally cruell: both are ſo inured to blood, that they make but a ſport of killing: Cuſtome makes ſinne ſo familiar, that the horror of it, is to ſome turned into pleaſure. (*Come let the young men play before vs.*) *Abner* is the

the Challenger, and ſpeeds thereafter: for though in the matches of duell both ſides miſcaried, yet in the following conflict, *Abner* and his men are beaten: By the ſucceſſe of thoſe ſingle combats no man knows the better of the cauſe: Both ſides periſh, to ſhow, how little God liked either the offer, or the acceptation of ſuch a triall, but when both did their beſt, God puniſheth the wrong part with diſcomfiture.

Oh, the miſery of ciuill diſſention: Iſrael and Iudah were brethren: One carryed the name of the Father, the other of the Sonne: Iudah was but a branch of Iſrael, Iſrael was the root

root of Iudah : yet Iudah and Iſrael muſt fight, and kill each other; only vpon the quarrell of an ill leaders ambition. The ſpeed of *Aſahel* was not greater then his courage : It was a minde fit for one of *Dauids* worthies, to ſtrike at the head, to match himſelfe with the beſt: He was both ſwift and ſtrong: but the race is not to the ſwift, nor the battle to the ſtrong : If he had gone neuer ſo ſlowly, he might haue ouertaken death: now he runnes to fetch it. So little luſt had *Abner* to ſhed the blood of a Son of *Zeruiah*, that he twice aduiſes him to retreat from purſuing his owne perill : *Aſahels* cauſe was ſo much better as

as *Abners* ſucceſſe: Many a one miſ-carries in the raſh proſecution of a good quarrell, when the Abettors of the worſt part goe away with victory. Heat of zeale, ſometimes in the vndiſcreet purſuit of a juſt aduerſary, prooues mortall to the agent, preiudiciall to the ſeruice.

Abner, whiles he kils, yet hee flyes, and runs away from his owne death, whiles hee inflicts it vpon another: *Dauids* followers had the better of the field and day; The Sun, as vnwilling to ſee any more Iſraelitiſh bloud ſhed by brethren, hath withdrawne himſelfe: and now both parts hauing got the aduantage

aduantage of an hil vnder them, haue safe conuenience of parley: *Abner* beginnes, and perswades *Ioab* to surcease the fight (*Shall the sword deuoure for euer? Knowest thou not, that it will bee bitternesse in the end? How long shall it bee, ere thou bid the people returne from following their brethren?*) It was his fault, that the sword deuoured at all: and why was not the beginning of a ciuill war bitternesse? why did he call forth the people to skirmish, and inuite them to death? Had *Abner* been on the winning hand, this motion had beene thank-worthy: It is a noble disposition in a Victor, to call for a cessatum of armes: wheras necessity wrings this

this ſuit from the ouer-matte
red. There cannot bee a greate
praiſe, to a valiant and wiſe
Commander, then a propenſi
on to all juſt termes of peace:
For warre, as it is ſometimes ne
ceſſary, ſo it is alwayes euill;
and if fighting haue any othe
end propoſed beſides peace, it
proues murder. *Abner* ſhall find
himſelfe no leſſe ouercome, by
Ioab in clemency, then power;
He ſayes not, I will not ſo eaſi
ly leaue the aduantage of my
victory: ſince the dice of war
run on my ſide, I will follow
the chace of my good ſucceſſe:
Thou ſhouldeſt haue conſide
red of this before thy prouoca
tion: It is now too late, to moue

vnto

vnto forbearance: but, as a man that meant to approue himselfe equally free from cowardise, in the beginning of the conflict, and from cruelty in the end; he professeth his forwardnesse, to entertaine any pretence of sheathing vp the swords of Israel; and sweares to *Abner*, that if it had not beene for his proud irritation, the people had in the morning before ceased from that bloudy pursuit of their brethren: As it becomes publique persons to bee louers of peace, so they must shew it vpon all good occasions: letting passe no opportunity of making spare of bloud.

Ishbosheth was (it seemes) a man

man of no great ſpirits, for be-
ing no leſſe then forty yeere
old, when his father went into
his laſt field againſt the Phili-
ſtims, he was content to ſtay at
home; *Abner* hath put ambition
vnto him; and hath eaſily rai-
ſed him to the head of a faction,
againſt the anoynted Prince of
Gods people. If this vſurped
Crowne of *Sauls* ſon, had any
worth or glory in it, hee cannot
but acknowledge, to owe it all
vnto *Abner*; yet how forward is
vnthankfull *Iſhboſheth* to receiue
a falſe ſuggeſtion againſt his
cheefe Abettor: (*Wherfore haſt
thou gone in, to my fathers Concu-
bine?*) He that made no conſci-
ence of an vniuſt claime of the
Crowne,

Crowne, and a maintenance of it with bloud, yet ſeemes ſcrupulous of a leſſe ſinne, that carried in it the color of a diſgrace; The touch of her, who had beene honoured by his fathers bed, ſeemed an intolerable preſumption, and ſuch as could not be ſeuered from his owne diſhonour: Selfe-loue ſometimes borrowes the face of honeſt zeale. Thoſe, who out of true grounds, diſlike ſins, doe hate them all indifferently; according to their haynouſneſſe; hypocrites are partiall in their deteſtation; bewraying euer moſt bitterneſſe, againſt thoſe offences, which may moſt preiudice their perſons and reputations.

It is as dangerous as vniuſt for Princes, to giue both their eares and their heart to miſgrounded rumors of their innocent followers: This wrong hath ſtript *Iſhboſheth* of the Kingdome; *Abner* in the meane time cannot be excuſed from a trecherous inconſtancy; If *Sauls* ſon had no true title to the Crowne, why did he maintaine it; If hee had, why did hee forſake the cauſe and perſon? Had *Abuer* out of remorſe, for furthering a falſe claime taken off his hand, I know not wherein hee could be blamed, except for not doing it ſooner; But now to withdraw his profeſſed allegeance, vpon a priuate reuenge, was

was to take a lewd leaue of an ill action: If *Ishboſheth* were his lawfull Prince, no iniury could warrant a reuolt; Euen betwixt priuate perſons, a returne of wrongs is both vncharitable, and vniuſt, how euer this goe currant for the common juſtice of the world, how much more ſhould we learn from a ſupreme hand, to take hard meaſures with thankes? It had been *Abners* duty, to haue giuen his King a peaceable and humble ſatisfaction, and not to fly out in a ſnuffe. If the ſpirit of the ruler riſe vp againſt thee, leaue not thy place, for yeelding, pacifieth great offences; now, his impatient falling, although to the

right ſide, makes him no better then trayterouſly honeſt.

So ſoone as *Abner* hath entertained a reſolution of his rebellion; hee perſwades the Elders of Iſrael to accompany him in the change: & whence doth he fetch his main motiue, but from the Oracle of God? (*The Lord hath ſpoken of Dauid, ſaying, By the hand of my ſeruant Dauid, will I ſaue my people Iſrael, out of the hand of the Philiſtims, and out of the hand of all their enemies*;) *Abner* knew this full well before, yet then was well content to ſmother a knowne truth for his owne turne, and now the publication of it may ſerue for his aduantage, he wins the heart of Iſrael, by

by ſhewing Gods Charter for him, whom he had ſo long oppoſed: Hypocrites make vſe of God for their owne purpoſes; and care onely to make diuine authority a colour for their owne deſignes; No man euer heard *Abner* godly till now; neither had hee beene ſo at this time, if hee had not intended a reuengefull departure from *Iſhboſheth*: Nothing is more odious, then to make religion a ſtalking horſe to policy.

Who can but glorifie God in his Iuſtice, when he ſees the bitter end of this trecherous diſſimulation: *Dauid* may vpon conſiderations of ſtate, entertaine his new gueſt with a feaſt;

and well might he ſeeme to deſerue a welcom, that vndertakes to bring all Iſrael to the league and homage of *Dauid*: but God neuer meant to vſe ſo vnworthy meanes, for ſo good a work. *Ioab* returnes from purſuing a troop, and finding *Abner* diſmiſſed in peace and expectation of a beneficiall returne followes him, and whether out of enuy, at a new riuall of honour, or out of the reuenge of *Aſabel*, he repayes him both diſſimulation and death; God doth moſt iuſtly by *Ioab*, that which *Ioab* did for himſelfe moſt vniuſtly, I know not (ſetting the quarrell aſide) whether we can worthily blame *Abner* for the death of *Aſahel*,

Asahel, who would needes after faire warnings, run himselfe vpon *Abners* speare: yet this fact shall procure his payment for worse. Now is *Ishbosheths* wrong reuenged by an enemy; wee may not alwayes measure the Iustice of Gods procedings, by present occasions; He needs not make vs acquainted, or aske vs leaue when hee will call for the arrerages of forgotten sins.

(***)

Contemplations VPON THE HISTORY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

The Fifteenth Booke:

Vzzah and the Arke
Dauid with Mephibosheth & Ziba.
Hanun and Dauids Ambassadors
Dauid with Bashsheba and Vriah
Nathan and Dauid
Amon and Thamar
Absaloms returne and Conspiracy.

TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE MY VERY GOOD LORD, WILLIAM Lord Burleigh All grace and happines.

Right Honorable,

THere are but two Bookes wherein we can read God; The one is his word, his workes the other; This is the bigger volume, that the more exquisite. The Characters of this are more large, but dimme; of that, smaller but clearer. Philosophers haue turned ouer this, and erred; That, Diuines and studious Christians, not without full and certaine information. In the workes of God wee see the shadow, or foot-steps of the Creator, in his word we see the face of God in a glasse. Happines consists in the vision of that infinite Maiestie: and if wee bee perfectly happy aboue

aboue in seeing him face to face, our h
pines is well forward below, in see
the liuely representation of his face in
glasse of the Scriptures. Wee can
spend our eyes too much vpon this o
iect; For mee, the more I see, the mo
I am amazed, the more I am ravish
with this glorious beauty: With the l
neſt lepers, I cannot bee content to en
this happy ſight alone; there is but o
way to euery mans felicity; May it plea
your Lordſhip to take part with m
your Peeres in theſe my weake; but
vnprofitable Contemplations; which ſh
hold themſelues not a little graced w
your Honorable name; Whereto, toget
with your right noble and moſt worth
Lady, I haue gladly deuoted my ſelfe
to be

Your Lordſhips in all dutifu
obſeruance

Ios: Hall.

Vzzah and the Arke remoued.

THe houſe of *Saul* is quiet, the Philiſtims beaten, victory cannot end better then in deuotion; *Dauid* is no ſooner ſetled in his houſe at Ieruſalem, then hee fetcheth God to be his gueſt there; the thouſands of Iſrael goe now in an holy march, to bring vp the Ark of God, to the place of his reſt: The tumults of warre afforded

forded no oportunity of thi
ſeruice; only peace is a frend t
religion, neither is peace eue
our frend, but when it is a ſer
uant of piety: The vſe of warr
is not more pernicious to the
body, then the abuſe of peace i
to the Soule; Alas, the ryot bre
of our long eaſe, rather driue
the Ark of God from vs; ſo th
ſtill ſedentary life, is ſubiect t
diſeaſes, and ſtanding water
putrifie. It may bee iuſt with
God, to take away the bleſſing
which wee doe ſo much abuſe,
and to ſcoure off our ruſt with
bloody warre, &c.

The Ark of God had now
many yeares, reſted in the ob-
ſcure lodge of *Abinadab*, without
the

he honor of a Tabernacle. *Da-*
id will not indure himſelfe
glorious, and the Ark of God
contemptible, his firſt care is to
prouide a fit roome for God;
in the head of the Tribes, in his
owne city; The chiefe care of
good Princes, muſt be the ad-
uancement of religion; What
ſhould the deputies of God ra-
ther do, then honor him whom
they repreſent? It was no good
that Iſrael could learne of Phi-
liſtims; Thoſe Pagans had ſent
the Ark backe in a new cart;
the Iſraelites ſaw God bleſſed
that conduct, and now they
practiſe it at home: But that
which God will take from Phi-
liſtims, he will not brook from
Iſrael;

Israel; Aliens from God are n
fit patternes for children: D
uine institution had made th
a cariage for the Leuites, not fo
Oxen: Neither should thos
Sons of *Abinadab* haue driue
the cart, but caryed that sacre
burden. Gods businesses mus
be done after his owne forme
which if we doe with the bes
intentions alter, wee presume

It is long, since Israel saw s
faire a day as this, wherein the
went in this holy triumph to
fetch the Ark of God; Now
their warlike trumpets are tur-
ned into Harpes and Timbrils;
and their hands in steed o
weilding the Sword and Speare
strike vpon those musicall
string

strings whereby they might expresse the ioy of their hearts; heere was no noyse but of mirth, no motion but pleasant: oh happy Israel that had a God to reioyce in, that had this occasion of reioycing in their God, and an hart that embraced this occasion. There is nothing but this wherein wee may not ioy immoderately, vnseasonably; this spirituall ioy can neuer be either out of time, or out of measure: let him that reioyceth, reioyce in the Lord. But now when the Israelites were in the midst of this Angel-like iolity, their hearts lifted vp, their hands playing, their feete mouing, their tongues singing and

ſhouting, God ſees good to ſtrike them into a ſudden dumpe by the death of *Vzzah*: They are ſcarce ſet into the tune when God mars their Muſicke, by a fearefull iudgement; and changes their mirth into aſtoniſhment, and confuſion; There could not bee more excellent worke then this they were about; there could not be more cheerefull hearts in the performing of it, yet will the moſt holy God rather daſh all this ſolemne ſeruice, then indure an act of preſumption or infidelity. *Abinadab* had bene the faithfull hoſt of Gods Ark, for the ſpace of twenty yeares: euen in the midſt of the terrors of Iſ-

rael,

rael, who were iuſtly affrighted with the vengance inflicted vpon Beth-ſhemeſh, did he giue harbour vnto it; Yet euen the ſon of *Abinadab* is ſtriken dead, in the firſt departing of that bleſſed gueſt: The Sanctity of the Parent cannot beare out the ſinne of his Sonne: The holy one of Iſrael will bee ſanctified in all that come neare him: He will be ſerued like himſelfe.

What then was the ſinne of *Vzzah*? What was the capitall crime, for which he ſo fearefully periſhed? That the Arke of God was committed to the Cart, it was not his deuice only, but the common act of many; That it was not caryed on the

shoulders of Leuites, was no lesse the fault of *Ahio*, and the rest of their brethren; only *Vzzah* is striken: The rest sinned in negligence, he in presumption; the Ark God shakes with the agitation of that cariage; he puts forth his hand to hold it steddy; Humane iudgement would haue found heerein nothing haynous: God sees not with the eyes of men; None but the Priests should haue dared to touch the Ark; It was enough for the Leuites to touch the bars that carryed it; An vnwarranted hand cannot so lightly touch the Ark, but hee strikes the God that dwels in it: No maruell if God strike that man with

with death, that ſtrikes him with preſumption; There was wel-neare the ſame quarell againſt the thouſands of Beth ſhemeſh, and againſt *Vzzah*; They dyed for looking into the Ark, he for touching it; leaſt Iſrael ſhould grow into a contemptuous familiarity with this Teſtimony of Gods preſence, he will hold them in awe with iudgements: The reuenging hand of the Almighty, that vpon the returne of the Ark ſtayed at the houſe of *Abinadab*, vpon the remoue of the Ark begins there againe: Where are thoſe that thinke God will take vp with a careleſſe and ſlubbred ſeruice? He whoſe infinite mer-

cy vſes to paſſe by our ſinnes of infirmity, puniſheth yet ſeuerely our bold faults: It wee cannot doe any thing in the degrees that he requireth, yet wee muſt learne to doe all things in the forme that he requireth; Doubtleſſe *Vzzah* meant no otherwiſe then well in putting forth his hand to ſtay the Ark; He knew the ſacred vtenſills that were in it, the pot of Manna, the Tables of the Law, the rod of *Aaron*, which might bee wronged by that ouer-rough motion: to theſe hee offers his ayd, and is ſtriken dead; The beſt intentions cannot excuſe; much leſſe warrant vs in vnlawfull actions; where wee doe ought in faith,

faith, it pleaſeth our good God to wink at, and pitty our weakneſſes; but if we dare to preſent God with the well-meant ſeruices of our owne making, wee runne into the indignation of God; There is nothing more dangerous, then to be our owne caruers in matter of deuotion.

I maruell not if the countenance of *Dauid* were ſuddenly changed, to ſee the pale face of death in one of the cheefe actors in this holy proceſſion: Hee that had found God ſo fauourable to him in actions of leſſe worth, is troubled to ſee this ſucceſſe of a buſineſſe ſo heartily directed vnto his God; and now he begins to look thorow

Vzzah at himselfe, and to say, (*How shall the Arke of the Lord come to mee?*) Then onely shall we make a right vse of the judgments of God vpon others, when we shall feare them in our selues, and finding our sins at least equall, shall tremble at the expectation of the same deserued punishments. God intends not onely reuenge in his executions, but reformation; As good Princes regard not so much the smart of the euill past, as the preuention of the future; which is neuer attained, but when we make applications of Gods hand, and draw common cases out of Gods particular proceedings.

I doe

I doe not heare *Dauid* say; Surely, this man is guilty of some secret sin, that the world knowes not; God hath met with him; there is no danger to vs; why should I bee discouraged to see God iust? Wee may goe on safely and prosper; but here his foot staies, and his hand fals from his instrument, and his tongue is ready to tax his owne vnworthinesse, (*How shall the Arke of the Lord come vnto mee?*) That heart is carnall and proud, that thinkes any man worse then himselfe; *Dauids* feare stayes his progresse; Perhaps, he might haue proceeded with good successe, but hee dares not venture, where hee sees such a deadly

deadly checke: It is better to bee too fearefull, then too forward in those affaires, which do immediately concerne God; As it is not good to refrain from holy businesses, so it is worse to doe them ill; Awfulnesse is a safe interpreter of Gods secret actions, and a wise guide of ours.

This euent hath holpen *Obed-Edom* to a guest he lookt not for, God shall now soiourne in the house of him, in whose heart he dwelt before by a strong faith; else the man durst not haue vndertaken, to receiue that dreadfull Arke, which *David* himselfe feared to harbour; Oh the courage of an honest and faithfull heart; *Obed-Edom* knew well enough

nough what ſlaughter the Arke had made among the Philiſtims, and after that amongſt the Beth-ſhemites, and now hee ſaw *Vzzah* lye dead before him, yet doth hee not make any ſcruple of entertaining it, neither doth he ſay, My neigbour *Abinadab* was a carefull and religious hoſt to the Ark, and is now payed with the bloud of his ſon; how ſhall I hope to ſpeede better; but he opens his doores with a bold cheerefulneſſe, and notwithſtanding all thoſe terrors, bids God welcome: Nothing can make God not amiable to his owne; Euen his very Iuſtice is louely: Holy men know how to reioyce in the

Lord

Lord with trembling, and can
feare without discouragement.
The God of Heauen will
not receiue any thing from
men on free cost; hee will pay
liberally for his lodging, a plen-
tifull blessing vpon *Obed-Edom*,
and all his household. It was an
honour to that zealous Gittite,
that the Arke would come vn-
der his roofe; yet God rewards
that honour with benediction:
Neuer man was a loser by true
godlinesse; The house of *Obed-*
Edom cannot this while want
obseruation; the eyes of *Da-*
uid, and all Israel are neuer off
from it, to see how it fared with
this entertainment. And now,
when they finde nothing, but a
gracious

gracious acceptation and ſenſible bleſſing, the good King of Iſrael takes new heart, and haſtens to fetch the Arke into his royall City. The view of Gods fauours vpon the godly, is no ſmall encouragement to confidence and obedience; Doubtleſſe, *Obed Edom* was not free from ſome weaknieſſes; If the Lord ſhould haue taken the aduantage of judgement againſt him, what Iſraelites had not been diſhartned from attending the Arke? Now *Dauid* & Iſrael was not more affrighted with the vengeance vpon *Vzzah*, then encouraged by the bleſſing of *Obed-Edom*; The wiſe God doth ſo order his iuſt and mercifull

proceedings, that the awefulnesse of men may be tempered with loue. Now the sweet singer of Israel reuiues his holy Musicke; and addes both more spirit and more pompe to so deuout a businesse: I did not before heare of trumpets, nor dancing, nor shouting, nor sacrifices, nor the linnen Ephod; The sense of Gods passed displeasure, doubles our care to please him, and our ioy in his recouered approbation; wee neuer make so much of our health, as after sicknesse, nor neuer are so officious to our friend, as after an vnkindnesse. In the first setting out of the Ark, *Dauids* feare was at least an equall match to his

his ioy; therefore after the first six paces hee offred a sacrifice, both to pacifie God, and thank him: but now when they saw no signe of dislike, they did more freely let themselues loose to a feareless ioy; and the body stroue to expresse the holy affection of the Soule; there was no limme, no part that did not professe their mirth by motion, no noyse of voyce, or instrument wanted to assist their spirituall iollity; *Dauid* led the way, dauncing with all his might in his linnen Ephod; *Vzzah* was still in his eye; he durst not vsurpe vpon a garment of Priests; but hee will borrow their colour to grace the solemnity,

nity, though he dare not the fashion; White was euer the colour of ioy, and linnen was light for vse; therfore he couers his Princely robes with white linnin, and meanes to honor himselfe by his conformity to Gods ministers. Those that thinke there is disgrace in the Ephod, are farre from the Spirit of the man after Gods owne hart; Neither can there bee a greater argument of a foule Soule, then a dislike of the glorious calling of God: Barren *Michal* hath too many Sons that scorne the holy habit and exercises: shee lookes through her window, and seeing the attyre and gestures of her deuout husband

band, deſpiſeth him in her hart, neither can ſhee conceale her contempt, but like *Sauls* daughter caſt it proudly in his face (*Oh how glorious was the King of Iſrael this day; which was vncouered to day in the eyes of the Maidens of his ſeruants, as a foole vncouereth himſelfe.*) Worldly harts can ſee nothing in actions of zeale, but folly and madneſſe: Piety hath no reliſh to their palate but diſtaſtfull.

Dauids hart did neuer ſwell ſo much at any reproch, as this of his wife; his loue was for the time loſt in his anger; and as a man impatient of no affront ſo much as in the way of his deuotion, hee returnes a bitter

checke to his *Micall*; (*It was before the Lord, which chose me rather then thy Father, & all his house, &c.*) Had not *Mical* twitted her husband with the shame of his zeale, she had not heard of the shamefull reiection of her Father; now since shee will be forrgetting, whose wife she was, she shall be put in minde whose daughter she was. Contumelyes that are cast vpon vs in the causes of God, may safely bee repayed: If we be meal-mouthed in the scornes of religion, wee are not patient, but zeale-lesse: Heere we may not forbeare her, that lies in our bosome. If *David* had not loued *Mical* dearely, he had neuer stood vpon those points

points with *Abner*; Hee knew that if *Abner* came to him, the Kingdome of Israel would accompany him, and yet he sends him the charge of not seeing his face, except he brought *Michal, Sauls* daughter with him; as if he would not regard the Crowne of Israel, whiles hee wanted that wife of his; Yet heere hee takes her vp roundly, as if she had bene an enimy, not a partener of his bed; All relations are a loose off, in comparison of that betwixt God, and the Soule; He that loues Father, or Mother, or wife, or childe, better then me (saith our Sauiour) is not worthy of me. Euen the highest delights of our harts

must be trampled vpon, when they will ſtand out in riuality with God. Oh happy reſolution of the royall Prophet, and propheticall King of Iſrael, (I will bee yet more vile then thus, and will bee low in mine owne ſight) he knew this very abaſement heroycall; and that the only way to true glory, is not to be aſhamed of our loweſt humiliation vnto God: Well might he promiſe himſelfe honor from thoſe, whoſe contempt ſhee had threatned; The hearts of men are not their owne, hee that made them, ouer-rules them, and inclines them to an honorable conceit of thoſe that honor their maker;

maker; So as holy men haue oft-times inward reuerence, euen where they haue outward indignities. *Dauid* came to bleſſe his houſe, *Mical* brings a curſe vpon her ſelfe; Her ſcornes ſhall make her childeleſſe to the day of her death; Barrenneſſe was held in thoſe times, none of the leaſt iudgements; God doth ſo reuenge *Dauids* quarrell vpon *Mical*, that her ſudden diſgrace, ſhall bee recompenced with perpetuall: Shee ſhall not bee held worthy to beare a Sonne, to him whō ſhe vniuſtly cōtemned; How iuſt is it with God to prouide whips for the back of ſcorners? It is no maruell if

those that mocke at goodnesse, bee plagued with continuall fruitlesnesse.

Mephi-

Mephiboſhetb and Ziba.

SO ſoone as euer *Dauid* can but breathe himſelfe from the publique cares, hee caſts backe his thoughts to the deare remembrance of his *Ionathan*. *Sauls* ſeruant is likely to giue him the beſt intelligence of *Sauls* ſons; The queſtion is therfore moued to *Ziba*; Remaineth there yet none of the houſe of *Saul*? and leſt ſuſpition might conceale

conceale the remainders of an emulous line in feare of reuenge intended, he addes: On whom I may ſhew the mercy of God for *Ionathans* ſake. O frendſhip worthy of the monuments of eternity; fit onely to requite him, whoſe loue was more then the loue of women; Hee doth not ſay, Is there any of the houſe of *Ionathan*, but of *Saul*; that for his frends ſake hee may ſhew fauour to the poſterity of his Perſecutor. *Ionathans* loue could not bee greater then *Sauls* malice, which alſo ſuruiued long in his iſſue; from whom *Dauid* found a buſie and ſtubborne riuality for the Crowne of Iſrael; yet as one that gladly buried all the hoſtility

hostility of *Sauls* house in *Ionathans* graue, he askes, *Is there any man left of Sauls house, that I may shew him mercy for Ionathans sake?* It is true loue that ouer-liuing the person of a frend, will be inherited of his seed: but to loue the posterity of an enemy in a frend, it is the miracle of frendship: The formall amity of the world is confined to a face; or to the possibility of recompence, languishing in the disability, and dying in the decease of the party affected: That loue was euer false, that is not euer constant, and then most operatiue, when it cannot bee either knowne, or requited.

To cut of all vnquiet competition

tition for the Kingdome of Israel, the prouidence of God had so ordered, that there is none left to the house of *Saul* (besides the sons of his Concubines) saue onely young and lame *Mephibosheth*; so young, that he was but fiue yeeres of age, when *David* entred vpon the gouernment of Israel; so lame, that if his age had fitted, his impotence had made him vnfit for the throne. *Mephibosheth* was not borne a Cripple, it was an heedlesse nurse that made him so: She hearing of the death of *Saul* and *Ionathan*, made such haste to flee, that her young Master was lamed with the fall: Ywis there needed no such speed to run away

way from *Dauid*; whose loue
ursues the hidden son of his
rother *Ionathan*: How often
oth our ignorant mistaking,
use vs to run from our best
ends, and to catch knocks and
naymes of them that profesſe
ur protection?

Mephibosheth could not come
otherwise then fearefully, into
he presence of *Dauid*, whom he
new so long; so spitefully op-
osed by the house of *Saul*: he
ould not be ignorant, that the
shion of the world is, to build
heir owne security vpon the
loud of the opposite faction;
neither to thinke themselues
afe, whiles any branch remains
springing out of that root of
their

their emulation: Seasonably doth *Dauid* therfore first, expel all those vniust doubts, ere he administer his further cordials (*Feare not, for I will surely shew thee kindnesse, for Ionathan thy father sake, and will restore thee all the field of Saul thy father, and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually*:)

Dauid can see neither Saul bloud, nor lame legs in *Mephibosheth*, whiles hee sees in him the features of his frend *Ionathan*; how much lesse shall the God of mercies regard our infirmities, or the corrupt bloud of our sinfull progenitors, whiles hee beholds vs in the face of his son, in whom he is well pleased.

Fauors are wont so much

more

more to affect vs, as they are
esse expected by vs; *Mephibo-*
sheth as ouer-ioyed with so
comfortable a word, and con-
founded in himselfe at the re-
membrance of the contrary de-
seruings of his family, bowes
himselfe to the earth, and sayes
(*What is thy seruant, that thou*
shouldst looke vpon such a dead dog
as I am?) I finde no defect of
wit, (though of limmes) in
Mephibosheth, he knew himselfe
the grand-childe of the King of
Israel, the Son of *Ionathan*, the
lawfull heyre of both, yet in
regard of his owne impotency,
and the trespasse and reiection
of his house, hee thus abaseth
himselfe vnto *Dauid*; Humilia-
tion

tion is a right vse of God
afflictions; What if wee we
borne great? If the sinne of h
grandfather hath lost his estat
and the hand of his Nurse ha
deformed and disabled hispe
son, hee now forgets wh
hee was, and calls himsel
worse then hee is a, *A dogge*.
Yet a liuing dogge, is bett
then a dead Lyon; the
is dignity and comfort in life.
Mephibosheth is therefore a De
Dog vnto *Dauid*: It is not so
vs to nourish the same Spirits i
our aduerse estate, that we
found in our highest prosper-
ty; What vse haue we made o
Gods hand, if wee bee not th
lower with our fall? God in-

tends

ends wee should carry our
rosse, not make a fire of it to
warme vs; It is no bearing vp
our sailes in a tempest; Good
Dauid cannot dis-esteeme *Mephi-*
bosheth euer the more for dispa-
raging himselfe; he loues and
honors this humility, in the Son
of *Ionathan*; There is no more
certaine way to glory and ad-
uancement, then a lowly de-
iection of our selues: Hee that
made himselfe a dog, and there-
fore fit only to lye vnder the ta-
ble, Yea a dead dog, and there-
fore fit only for the ditch, is
rayled vp to the Table of a
King; his seate shall bee hono-
rable, yea, royall, his fare delici-
ous, his attendance noble. How
much

much more will our gracious God, lift vp our heads, vnto true honor before men and Angels, if wee can bee syncerely humbled in his sight? If wee mis-call our selues in the meanenesse of our conceits to him, he giues vs a new name, and sets vs at the table of his glory; It is contrary with God and men, if they reckon of vs as wee set out our selues, hee values vs according to our abasements. Like a Prince truly munificent and faithfull, *Dauid* promises and performes at once; *Ziba* *Sauls* seruant hath the charge giuen him, of the execution of that royall word; *He shall be the Bayliffe of this great husbandry of his*

his master Mephibosheth; The land of *Saul*, how euer forfaited, shall know no other master then *Sauls* grand-childe; As yet, *Sauls* seruant had sped better then his Son: I read of twenty seruants of *Ziba*, none of *Mephibosheth*; Earthly possessions, doe not alwayes admit of equall diuisions; The wheele is now turned vp; *Mephibosheth* is a Prince, *Ziba* is his officer; I cannot but pitty the condition of this good Son of *Ionathan*; Into how ill hands did honest *Mephibosheth* fall, first, of a careless Nurse, then of a trecherous seruant; She maymed his body, hee would haue ouerthrowne his estate; After some yeares of eye seruice to

Mephibosheth, wicked *Ziba* intends to giue him a worse fall then his nurse. Neuer any Court was free from detractors, from delators, who if they see a man to be a creeple, that hee cannot goe to speake for himselfe, will be telling tales of him, in the eares of the great; such a one was this perfidious *Ziba*; who taking the oportunity of *Dauids* flight from his Son *Absalom*, followes him with a faire present, and a falsetale, accusing his impotent master of a foule and trayterous ingratitude; labouring to tread vpon his lame Lord to rayse himselfe to honor: True-harted *Mephibosheth* had as good a will as the best;

if

if he could haue commanded legges, he had not beene left behinde *Dauid*: now that he cannot goe with him; hee will not be well without him, and therfore puts himselfe to a wilfull and sullen penance, for the absence and danger of his King; hee will not so much as put on cleane clothes for the time, as he that could not haue any ioy in himselfe, for the want of his Lord *Dauid*; Vnconscionable miscreants care not how they collogue, whom they slander for a priuate aduantage; Lewd *Ziba* comes with a gifte in his hand, and a smooth tale in his mouth; Oh sir, you thought you had a *Ionathan* at home, but

you will finde a *Saul*, It were pitty but hee ſhould bee ſet at your table, that would ſit in your throne; you thought *Sauls* land would haue contented *Mephiboſheth*, but he would haue all yours; though hee bee lame yet hee would bee climbing; would you haue thought that this creple could be plotting for your kingdome, now that you are but gone aſide? *Iſhboſheth* will neuer die whiles *Mephiboſheth* liues: How did hee now forget his impotence, and rayſed vp his ſpirits in hope of a day; and durſt ſay, that now the time was comne, wherein the Crowne ſhould reuert to *Sauls* true heyre, Oh viper: If a Serpent

Serpent bite in secret when hee is not charmed, no better is a slanderer; Honest *Mephibosheth* in good manners made a dead dog of himselfe, when *Dauid* offred him the fauour of his board; but *Ziba* would make him a very dog indeed, an ill-natur'd curre, that when *Dauid* did thus kindely feed him at his owne table, would not only bite his fingers, but flye at his throat.

But what shall we say to this? Neither earthly soueraignty, nor holynesse can exempt men from humane infirmities. Wise and good *Dauid* hath now but one eare; and that misled; with credulity; His charity in belee-

uing *Ziba*, makes him vncharitable in diſtruſting, in cenſuring *Mephiboſheth*. The detractor hath not only ſudden credit giuen him, but *Sauls* land, *Ionathans* Son hath loſt (vnheard) that inheritance, which was giuen him vnſought. Heare-ſay is no ſafe ground of any iudgement; *Ziba* ſlaunders, *Dauid* beleeues, *Mephiboſheth* ſuffers.

x Lyes ſhall not alwayes proſper, God will not abide the truth to be euer oppreſſed; At laſt *Ionathans* lame Son ſhall bee found as ſound in heart, as lame in his body; Hee whoſe Soule was like his father *Ionathans* Soule, whoſe body was like to his grand-father *Sauls* Soule, meets

meets *Dauid* (as it was high time) vpon his returne; beſtirs his tongue, to diſcharge himſelfe of ſo foule a ſlaunder; The more horrible the crime had beene, the more villanous was the vniuſt ſuggeſtion of it, and the more neceſſary was a iuſt Apologie; Sweetly therefore, and yet paſſionately doth hee labour to greaten *Dauids* fauours to him; his owne obligations and vileneſſe; ſhowing himſelfe more affected with his wrong, then with his loſſe; welcomming *Dauid* home with a thankfull neglect of himſelfe, as not caring that *Ziba* had his ſubſtance, now that he had his king. *Dauid* is ſatisfied, *Mephibosheth* re-

ſtored to fauour and lands; here are two kinde harts well met. *Dauid* is full of ſatisfaction from *Mephiboſheth*; *Mephiboſheth* runs ouer with joy in *Dauid*: *Dauid*, like a gracious King, giues *Mephiboſheth* (as before) *Sauls* lands to halues with *Ziba*; *Mephiboſheth*, like a King, giues all to *Ziba*, for joy that God had giuen him *Dauid*; All had beene well, if *Ziba* had fared worſe; Pardon mee, ô holy and glorious ſoule of a Prophet, of a King, after Gods owne heart, I muſt needs blame thee for mercy: A fault that the beſt and moſt generous natures are moſt ſubiect to. It is pitty, that ſo good a thing ſhould doe hurt; yet

yet wee finde, that the best, misvsed is most dangerous: Who should be the patterne of Kings, but the King of God? Mercy is the gentlest flower in his Crowne, much more in theirs, but with a difference. Gods mercy is infinite, theirs limited; he sayes, *I will haue mercy on whom I will:* they must say, *I will haue mercy on whom I should:* And yet he, for all his infinite mercy, hath vessels of wrath, so must they; of whom his Iustice hath sayd, Thine eye shall not spare them: A good man is pitifull to his beast, shall hee therefore make much of toads & snakes? Oh that *Ziba* should goe away with any possession, saue of shame

ſhame and ſorrow; that hee ſhould bee coupled with a *Mephiboſheth* in a partnerſhip of eſtates: Oh that *Dauid* had changed the word a litle;

A diuiſion was due here indeed; but of *Ziba's* eares from his head, or his head from his ſhoulders, for going about ſo maliciouſly, to diuide *Dauid* from the ſon of *Ionathan*; An eye for an eye, was Gods rule; If that had beene true, which *Ziba* ſuggeſted againſt *Mephiboſheth*, he had been worthy to loſe his head with his lands, being falſe, it had beene but reaſon, *Ziba* ſhouldhaue changed heads with *Mephiboſheth*; Had not holy *Dauid* himſelfe beene ſo ſtung

with

with venomous tongues, that he cryes out in the bitternesse of his soule; What reward shall be giuen to thee, ô thou false tongue? euen sharp arrowes with hot burning coles. Hee that was so sensible of himselfe in *Doegs* wrong, doth he feele so little of *Mephibosheth* in *Ziba's*? Are these the arrowes of *Dauids* quiuer? are these his hot burning coles (*Thou & Ziba diuide?*) He that had sayd, Their tongue is a sharp sword, now that hee had the sword of just reuenge in his hand, is this the blow hee giues, *Diuide the possessions?* I know not whether, excesse, or want of mercy, may proue most dangerous in the great; the one may

discourage good intentions with feare; the other may encourage wicked practices through presumption; Those that are in eminent place, must learne the mid-way betwixt both; so pardoning faults, that they may not prouoke them; so punishing them, that they may not dishearten vertuous and wel-meant actions; they must learne to sing that absolute ditty (whereof *Dauid* had here forgotten one part) of Mercy & Iudgement.

Hanun

Hanun and Dauids Ambaſſadours.

IT is not the meaning of religion, to make men vnciuill; If the King of Ammon were heathenish, yet his kindnes may be acknowledged, may bee returned by the King of Iſrael. I ſay not, but that perhaps *Dauid*, might maintaine too ſtrayt a league with that forbidden nation; A little frendſhip is enough to an Idolater; but euen the ſauage Cannibals

Cannibals may receiue an answer of outward courtesie: If a very dog fawne vpon vs, we stroke him on the head, and clap him on the side; much lesse is the common band of humanity vntyed by Grace: Disparity in spirituall professions, is no warrant for ingratitude: Hee therfore, whose good nature proclaimed to shew mercy to any branch of *Sauls* house, for *Ionathans* sake, will now also shew kindnesse to *Hanun*, for the sake of *Nahash* his father.

It was the same *Nahash*, that offered the cruell condition to the men of Iabesh Gilead, of thrusting out their right eyes for the admission into his cou-

nant.

ant. He that was thus bloudy
his deſignes againſt Iſrael, yet
was kinde to *Dauid*; perhaps
or no cauſe ſo much, as *Sauls*
ppoſition; And yet euen this
uour is held worthy both of
emory, & retribution: where
e haue the acts of courteſie,
is not neceſſary wee ſhould
ter into a ſtrict examination
the grounds of it; whiles the
enefit is ours, let the intention
e their owne; What euer the
earts of men are, we muſt look
their hands, and repay, not
hat they meant, but what they
id;

Nahaſh is dead, *Dauid* ſends
mbaſſadours to condole his
ſſe, and to comfort his ſonne

Hanun.

Hanun. No Ammonite, but ſadly affected with the death a father, though it gaine him Kingdome: Euen *Eſau* could ſay, the dayes of mourning for my father will come; No earthly aduantage can fill vp the gap of nature: Thoſe children are worſe then Ammonites, that can thinke either gaine, or liberty, worthy to counteruaile a parents loſſe.

Carnall men are wont to meaſure anothers foot, by their owne laſt; their owne falſhood makes them vniuſtly ſuſpitious of others. The Princes of Ammon, becauſe they are guilty to their owne hollowneſſe, and doubleneſſe of heart, are ready

ſo

so to iudge of *Dauid* and his messengers (*Thinkest thou that Dauid doth honour thy father, that hee hath sent comforters vnto thee. Hath not Dauid rather sent his owne seruants to thee, to search the City, and to spye it out, to ouerthrow it*;) It is hard for a wicked heart to think well of any other; because it can thinke none better then it selfe, and knowes it selfe euill: The freer a man is from vice himselfe, the more charitable he vses to be vnto others.

Whatsoeuer *Dauid* was particularly in his owne person, it was ground enough of preiudice, that he was an Israelite; It was an hereditary and deep setled hatred, that the Ammonites

had conceiued againſt their brethren of Iſrael: neither can they forget that ſhamefull and feareſull foyle, which they receiued from the reſcuers of Iabeſh-Gilead; and now ſtill doe they ſtomach at the name of Iſrael; Malice once conciued in worldly hearts, is not eaſily extinguiſhed, but vpon all occaſions, is ready to break forth into a flame of reuengefull actions.

Nothing can be more dangerous, then for young Princes, to meet with ill counſell in the entrance of their gouernment; for both then are they moſt prone to take it, and moſt difficultly recouered from it; If we be ſet out of our way in the beginning

ning of our journey, wee wander all the day; How happy is that ſtate, where both the Counſellors are faithfull, to giue only good aduice; and the King wiſe to diſcerne good aduice from euill: The young King of Ammon is eaſily drawne to beleeue his Peeres, and to miſtruſt the meſſengers; and hauing now in his conceit turned them into Spies, entertaines them with a ſcornefull diſgrace; hee ſhaues off, one halfe of their beards, & cuts off one halfe of their garments; expoſing them to the deriſion of all beholders. The Iſraelites were forbidden either a ſhauen beard, or a ſhort garment; in deſpight, perhaps, of

their Law, these Ambassadours are sent away with both: Certainly in a despight of their Master, and a scorne of their persons.

King *Dauid* is not a little sensible of the abuse of his Messengers, and of himselfe in them; first therefore, he desires to hide their shame, then to reuenge it. Man hath but a double ornament of body, the one of nature, the other of Art; The naturall ornament is the haire, the artificiall is apparrell; *Dauids* Messengers are deformed in both; The one is easily supplyed by a new suit, the other can onely bee supplyed

plyed out of the ward-robe of Time; *Tarry at Iericho till your beards be growne*. How easily had this deformity beene remooued, if as *Hanun* had shauen one side of their faces, so they had shauen the other; what had this beene but to resemble their younger age, or that other sex, in neither of which, doe wee vse to place any imagination of vnbeseeming; neither did their want some of their neighbour Nations, whose faces age it selfe had not wont to couer with this shade of haire: But so respectiue is good *Dauid*, and his wise Senators, of their country-

formes; that they ſhall by appoyntment rather tarry abroad, till time haue wrought their conformity, then vary from the receiued faſhions of their owne people. Alas, into what a licentious variety of ſtrange diſguiſes are wee falne? the glory of attire is ſought in nouelty, in miſhapenneſſe, in monſtrouſneſſe: There is much latitude, much liberty in the vſe of theſe indifferent things; but becauſe wee are free, wee may not run wilde; and neuer thinke wee haue ſcope enough, vnleſſe wee out-run modeſty.

It is lawfull for publique perſons, to feele their owne indignities, and to endeauour their reuenge.

reuenge. Now *Dauid* ſends all the hoſt of the mighty men to puniſh Ammon, for ſo foule an abuſe; Thoſe that receiued the Meſſengers of his loue, with ſcorne and inſolency, ſhall now bee ſeuerely ſaluted with the Meſſengers of his wrath. It is juſt both with God and men, that they, who know not how to take fauours aright, ſhould ſmart with judgements. Kindneſſe repulſed, breakes forth into indignation; how much more when it is repayd with an iniurious affront?

Dauid cannot but feele his owne cheekes ſhauen, and his owne cotes cut in his Ambaſſadors; They did but carry his

perſon to *Hanun*; neither can hee therfore but appropriate to himſelfe the kindneſſe, or iniury offered vnto them; He that did ſo take to heart the cutting off, but the lap of King *Sauls* garment, when it was layd aſide from him, how muſt hee needes bee affected with this diſdainefull haluing of his haire and robes, in the perſon of his Deputies. The name of Ambaſſadours hath beene euer ſacred, and by the vniuerſall Law of Nations, hath carried in it ſufficient protection, from all publique wrongs, nether hath it euer beene violated, without a reuenge. Oh God, what ſhall wee ſay to thoſe noto-

notorious contempts which are dayly caſt vpon thy ſpirituall meſſengers? Is it poſſible thou ſhouldſt not feele them, thou ſhouldſt not auenge them? Wee are made a gazing ſtocke to the world, to Angels and to men, wee are deſpiſed and trodden downe in the duſt; Who hath beleeued our report, and to whom is the arme of the Lord reuealed?

How obſtinate are wicked men in their peruerſe reſolutions. Theſe fooliſh Ammonites had rather hyre Syrians to maintaine a warre againſt Iſrael in ſo foule a quarrell, beſides the hazard of their owne liues, then

then confesse the error of their iealous mis-construction.

It is one of the madde principles of wickednesse, that it is a weakenesse to relent, and rather to Dye then yeild; Euen ill causes once vndertaken, must bee vpheld although with bloud; whereas the gracious hart finding his owne mis-taking, doth not only remit of an vngrounded displeasure, but studies to bee reuenged of it selfe; and to giue satisfaction to the offended.

The mercenary Syrians are drawne to venture their liues for a fee; twenty thousand of them are hyred into the field against Israel; Fond Pagans that know

know not the value of a man; their bloud coſt them nothing, and they care not to ſell it good cheape; How can wee thinke thoſe men haue Soules, that eſteeme a little white earth aboue themſelues? that neuer inquire into the iuſtice of the quarell, but the rate of the pay, that can rifle for drams of ſiluer, in the bowels of their owne fleſh, and either kill or die for a dayes wages?

Ioab the wiſe Generall of Iſrael ſoone findes, where the ſtrength of the battle lay, and ſo marſhalls his troupes, that the choyce of his men ſhall incounter the vantgard of the Syrians. His brother *Abiſhai* leads the reſt

reſt againſt the children of Ammon; with this couenant of mutuall aſſiſtance, (*If the Syrians be too ſtrong for mee, then thou ſhalt helpe mee; but if the children of Ammon be too ſtrong for thee, then will I come and helpe thee*,) It is an happy thing, when the captains of Gods people ioyne together as brethren, and lend their hand to the ayde of each other againſt the common aduerſary. Concord in defence, or aſſault is the way to victory; as contrarily, the deuiſion of the Leaders is the ouerthrow of the army.

Set aſide ſome particular actions, *Ioab* was a worthy Captaine, both for wiſdome and valour. Who could either exhort

or

or resolue better then he, (*Be of good courage, and let vs play the men, for our people, and for the cities of our God; and the Lord doe that which seemeth him good?*) It is not either priuate glory or profit that whets his fortitude, but the respect to the cause of God, and his people; That Souldier can neuer answer it to God, that strikes not more as a Iusticer, then as an enemy; Neither doth hee content himselfe with his owne courage, but he animates others. The tongue of a Commander fights more then his hand; it is enough for priuate men to exercise what life and limmes they haue, a good Leader must out of his owne abundance,

dance, put life and ſpirits into all others; If a Lyon lead ſheep into the field, there is hope of victory: Laſtly, when he had done his beſt, he reſolues to depend vpon God for the iſſue, not truſting to his ſword, or his bowe, but to the prouidence of the Almightie for ſucceſſe; as a man religiouſly awfull, and awfully confident, whiles there ſhould bee no want in their owne indeuours: he knew well that the race was not to the ſwift, nor the battle to the ſtrong, therefore hee lookes vp aboue the hills whence commeth his ſaluation; All valour is cowardiſe to that, which is built vpon religion.

I

I maruel not to ſee *Ioab* victo-
rious, whiles he is thus godly;
The Syrians flee before him,
like flocks of ſheepe; the Amo-
nites follow them; The two
Sons of *Zeruiah* haue nothing
to doe, but to purſue and exe-
cute; The throates of the Amo-
nites are cut, for cutting the
beards and cotes of the Iſraeli-
tiſh meſſengers; Neither doth
this reuenge end in the field;
Rabba the royall city of Am-
mon is ſtrongly beleguered by
Ioab; the City of waters (after
well-neare a yeares ſiege) yeil-
deth; the reſt can no longer
hold out; now *Ioab*, as one that
deſired more to approue him-
ſelfe a loyall and carefull ſub-
iect,

iect, then a happy Generall, ſends to his maſter *Dauid* that he ſhould come perſonally, and encampe againſt the City and take it; *Leaſt* (ſaith he) *I take it and it be called after my name.* Oh noble and imitable fidelity of a dutifull ſeruant, that prefers his Lord to himſelfe, and is ſo farre from ſtealing honor from his maſters deſerts, that he willingly remits of his owne, to adde vnto his. The warre was not his; he was only imployed by his Soueraigne; The ſame perſon that was wronged in the Ambaſſadors, reuengeth by his ſoldiers; the praiſe of the act ſhall (like fountaine water) returne to the ſea, whence it originally

ginally came: To seeke a mans owne glory is not glory. Alas, how many are there, who being sent to sue for God, wooe for themselues. Oh God, it is a fearfull thing to robbe thee of that which is deareſt to thee, glory; which as thou wilt not giue to any creature, so much lesse wilt thou indure that any creature should filtch it from thee, and giue it to himselfe. Haue thou the honor of all our actions, who giueſt a beeing to our actions and vs, and in both haſt moſt iuſtly regarded thine owne praiſe.

Dauid with Bathſheba and VRIAH.

With what vnwillingnes, with what feare, do I ſtill look vpon the miſcariage of the man after Gods owne hart? O holy Prophet, who can promiſe himſelfe alwayes to ſtand, when he ſees thee falne and maimed in the fall? Who can aſſure himſelfe of an immunity from the fouleſt ſins, when hee ſees the offending ſo haynouſly,

nously, so bloudily? Let profane eyes behold thee contentedly, as a patterne, as an excuse of sinning; I shall neuer looke at thee but through teares, as a wofull spectacle of humane infirmity:

Whiles *Ioab* and all Israel were busie in the warre against *Ammon*, in the siege of Rabbah, Satan findes time to lay siege to the secure hart of *Dauid*; Who euer found *Dauid* thus tempted, thus foyled in the dayes of his busie warres? Now only doe I see the King of Israel, rising from his bed in the euening; The time was, when he rose vp in the morning to his early deuotions; when hee brake his

nightly reſt with publique cares, with the buſineſſe of eſtate; all that while he was innocent, he was holy; but now that he wallowes in the bed of idleneſſe, he is fit to inuite a tentation. The induſtrious man hath no leaſure to ſinne. The idle hath neither leaſure nor power to auoyd ſinne; Exerciſe is not more wholſome for the body, then for the Soule, the remiſſion whereof breeds matter of diſeaſe in both: The water that hath beene heated, ſooneſt freezeth; the moſt actiue Spirit ſooneſt tyreth with ſlackning; The earth ſtands ſtill, and is all dregs; the heauens euer moue, and are pure. We haue no reaſon

son to complaine of the assiduity of work; the toyle of action is answered by the benefit; If wee did lesse wee should suffer more; Satan like an idle companion, if he finde vs busie, flies backe and sees it no time to entertaine vaine purposes with vs; Wee cannot please him better then by casting away our work, to hold chat with him; wee cannot yeild so farre and bee guiltlesse.

Euen *Dauids* eyes haue no sooner the sleepe rubbed out of them, then they roue to wanton prospects; He walkes vpon his roofe, and sees *Bathsheba* washing her selfe; inquires after her, sends for her, solicits her to

vncleanenesse. The same Spirit that shut vp his eyes in an vnseasonable sleepe, opens them vpon an intising obiect; while sinne hath such a Solicitor, it cannot want either meanes or opportunitie: I cannot thinke *Bathsheba* could bee so immodest, as to wash her selfe openly, especially from her naturall vncleanenesse; Lust is quick-sighted; *Dauid* hath espyed her, where she could espye no beholder: His eyes recoyle vpon his hart, and haue smitten him with a sinfull desire.

There can bee no safety to that Soule, where the senses are let loose. He can neuer keep his couenant with God, that makes not

not a couenant with his eyes: It is an Idle presumption to thinke the outward man may be free, whiles the inward is safe: He is more then a man, whose hart is not led by his eies, he is no regenerate man whose, eyes are not restrayned by his hart.

Oh *Bathsheba*, how wert thou washed from thine vncleanenesse, when thou yeildedst to goe into an adulterous bed? Neuer wert thou so foule: as now when thou wert new washed; The worst of nature, is cleanlinesse, to the best of sinne: thou hadst beene cleane if thou hadst not washed; yet for thee, I know how to plead infirmity

of sexe; and the importunity of a King, But what shall I say for thee, O thou royall Prophet, and propheticall King of Israel, where shall I finde ought to extenuate that crime, for which God himselfe hath noted thee? Did not thine holy profession teach thee to abhorre such a sin more then death? Was not thy iustice wont to punish this sin with no lesse then death? Did not thy very calling call thee to a protection and preseruation of iustice, of chastity in thy subiects? Didst thou want store of wiues of thine owne? wert thou restrayned from taking more? was there no beauty in Israel, but in a subiects mariage-bed?

bed? Wert thou ouercome by the vehement solicitations of an adultéresse? wert thou not the tempter, the prosecutor of this vncleanenesse? I should accuse thee deeply, if thou hadst not accused thy selfe; Nothing wanted to greaten thy sinne, or our wonder, and feare. O God, whither doe wee goe if thou stay vs not? Who euer amongst the millions of thy seruants could finde himselfe furnished with stronger preseruatiues against sinne? Against whom could such a sinne finde lesse pretence of preuailing? Oh keep thou vs, that presumtuous sins preuaile not ouer vs; So only shall wee be free from great offences.

The

The ſuites of Kings are imperatiue; Ambition did now proue a bawd to luſt. *Bathſheba* yeildeth to offend God, to diſhonour her husband, to clogge and wound her owne Soule, to abuſe her body: Diſhoneſty growes bold, when it is countenanced with greatneſſe. Eminent perſons had need be carefull of their demaunds; they ſinne by authority, that are ſolicited by the mighty.

Had *Bathſheba* beene mindefull of her matrimonial fidelity, perhaps *Dauid* had beene ſoone checked in his inordinate deſire; her facility furthers the ſinne. The firſt motioner of euill is moſt faulty, but as in quarrels,

quarels, so in offences, the second blow (which is the consent) makes the fray. Good Ioseph was moued to folly, by his great and beautifull mistres, this fire fell vpon wet tinder, and therefore soone went out. Sinne is not acted alone; if but one party bee wise, both escape. It is no excuse to say, I was tempted, though by the great, though by the holy and learned; Almost all sinners are misled by that transformed Angel of light; The action is that wee must regard, not the person; Let the mouer be neuer so glorious, if he stirre vs to euill, hee must be intertained with defiance.

The God that knowes how to

to raiſe good out of euill, bleſſe an adulterous copulation with that increaſe, which hee denyes to the chaſt imbracements of honeſt wedlock: *Bathſheba* hath conceiued by *Dauid*; and now at once conceiues a ſorrow and care how to ſmother the ſhame of her conception; He that did the fact, muſt hide it. Oh *Dauid*, where is thy repentance? Where is thy tenderneſſe and compunction of hart? Where are thoſe holy meditations, which had wont to take vp thy Soule? Alas, in ſteed of clearing thy ſinne, thou laboureſt to cloke it; and ſpendeſt thoſe thoughts in the concealing of thy wickedneſſe, which thou ſhouldſt rather

ther haue bestowed in pre-
ring it: The best of Gods
ildren may not onely bee
enched in the waues of sin,
t lye in them for the time, and
haps sinke twice to the bot-
me; What hypocrite could
ue done worse, then study
w to couer the face of his sin
om the eyes of men, whiles
regarded not the sting of sin
his soule. As there are some
cts, wherein the Hypocrite is a
nt, so there are some, wherin
e greatest Saint vpon earth
ay be an Hypocrite; *Saul* did
us goe about to colour his
n, and is cursed; The vessels
mercy and wrath, are not e-
er distinguishable by their acti-
ons.

ons. Hee makes the difference that will haue mercy on whom he will, and whom he will, he hardeneth.

It is rare and hard to commit a ſingle ſinne; *Dauid* hath abuſed the wife of *Vriah*, now hee would abuſe his perſon, in cauſing him to father a falſe ſeede: That worthy Hittite is ſent for from the wars; and now after ſome cunning, and far-fetcht queſtions, is diſmiſſed to his houſe, not without a preſent of fauour; *Dauid* could not but imagine, that the beauty of his *Bathſheba*, muſt needes be attractiue enough to an husband, whom long abſence in wars, had with-held all that while

from

om so pleasing a bed; neither ould he thinke, that since that ace, and those brests had power o allure himselfe to an vnlaw-ull lust, it could bee possible, hat *Vriah* should not bee inui-ed by them, to an allowed and warrantable fruition.

That *Dauids* heart might now he rather strike him, in compa-ing the chaste resolutions of his seruant, with his owne light incontinence; good *Vriah* sleeps t the doore of the Kings pa-ace, making choyce of a stony illow, vnder the canopy of Heauen, rather then the delicate ed of her, whom hee thought s honest, as he knew faire. *The Arke* (saith he) *and Israel, and Iudah,*

dwell

dwell in tents, and my Lord Ioab, and the ſeruants of my Lord, abide in the open fields; ſhall I then goe into mine houſe, to eat, and drinke, and lye with my wife; by thy life, and by the life of thy ſoule, I will not doe this thing.

Who can but bee aſtoniſhed at this change, to ſee a Souldier auſtere, and a Prophet wanton? And how doth that Souldiers auſterity, ſhame the Prophets wantonneſſe? Oh zealous and mortified ſoule, worthy of a more faithfull wife, of a more iuſt maſter, how didſt thou ouer-looke all baſe ſenſuality, and hatedſt to be happy alone? War and luſt had wont to be reputed frends; thy breſt is not more full of courage then cha-

ſtity

stiry, and is so far from wandring after forbidden pleasures, that it refuseth lawfull.

There is a time to laugh, and a time to mourne; a time to embrace, and a time to be far from embracing; euen the best actions are not alwayes seasonable, much lesse the indifferent: He that euer takes liberty to doe what he may, shall offend no lesse, then he that sometimes takes liberty to doe what he may not.

If any thing, the Arke of God is fittest to lead our times; according as that is either distressed, or prospereth, should we frame our mirth, or mourning. To dwell in sieled houses, whiles the Temple lyes

waſte, is the ground of Gods iuſt quarrell. How ſhall wee ſing a ſong of the Lord in a ſtrange land; If I forget thee, ô Ieruſalem, let my right hand forget her cunning; If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleaue to the roofe of my mouth; yea, if I prefer not Hieruſalem to my cheefe ioy.

As euery man is a limme of the communitie, ſo muſt hee be affected with the eſtate of the vniuerſal body, whether healthfull, or languiſhing; It did not more aggrauate *Dauids* ſin, that whiles the Arke and Iſrael was in hazard and diſtreſſe, he could finde time to looſe the reynes to wanton deſires, and actions,

then

then it magnifies the religious zeale of *Vriah*, that he abandons comfort, till he see the Arke and Israel victorious.

Common dangers, or calamities must (like the rapt motion) carry our hearts contrary to the wayes of our priuate occasions.

Hee that cannot bee mooued with words, shall be tryed with wine; *Vriah* had equally protested against feasting at home, and society with his wife; To the one, the authority of a King forces him abroad, in hope that the excesse thereof shall force him to the other: It is like, that holy Captaine intended onely to yeeld so much obedience, as

might consist with his course of austerity. But wine is a mocker, when it goes plausibly in, no man can imagine how it will rage and tyrannize; he that receiues that Traytor within his gates, shall too late complaine of a surprizall. Like vnto that ill spirit, it insinuates sweetly, but in the end, it bites like a Serpent, & hurts like a Cockatrice. Euen good *Vrias* is made drunk; the holyest soule may bee ouertaken; It is hard gaine-saying, where a King begins an health to a subiect; Where, oh where, will this wickednesse end? *Dauid* will now procure the sin of another, to hide his owne; *Vrias* drunkennesse is more *Dauids* offence,

offence, then his. It is weakly yeelded to of the one, which was wilfully intended of the other. The one was as the sinner, the other as the tempter.

Had not *Dauid* knowne, that wine was an inducement to lust, he had spared those superfluous cups. Experience had taught him, that the eye debauched with wine, will looke vpon strange women: The Drunkard may bee any thing saue good. Yet in this the ayme failed; Grace is stronger then wine; Whiles that with-holds, in vaine shall the fury of the grape attempt to carry *Vriah* to his own bed. Sober *Dauid* is now worse then drunken *Vriah*. Had not

the King of Israel beene more intoxicate with sin, then *Vriah* with drinke, he had not in a sober intemperance climbed vp into that bed, which the drunken temperance of *Vriah* refused.

If *Dauid* had beene but himself, how had he loued, how had he honoured this honest and religious zeale, in his so faithfull seruant; whom now he cruelly seekes to reward with death? That fact which wine cannot hide, the sword shall; *Vriah* shall beare his owne *Mittimus* vnto *Ioab*; *Put yee Vriah in the fore front of the strength of the battle, and recule backe from him, that he may bee smitten, and die.*) What is becomne of thee,

thee, ô thou good Spirit, that hadst wont to guide thy chosen seruant in his former wayes? Is not this the man, whom wee lately saw so heart-smitten, for but cutting off the lap of the garment of a wicked Master, that is now thus lauish of the bloud, of a gracious and well-deseruing Seruant? Could it be likely, that so worthy a Captaine could fall alone? Could *Dauid* haue expiated this sinne with his owne bloud, it had beene but well spent, but to couer his sinne with the innocent bloud of others, was a crime aboue astonishment. Oh the deepe deceitfulnesse of sinne; If the Deuill should haue comne

to *Dauid*, in the moſt louely forme of *Bathſheba* her ſelfe, and at the firſt ſhould haue directly, and in termes, ſolicited him to murder his beſt ſeruant; I doubt not, but hee would haue ſpat ſcorne in that face, on which he ſhould otherwiſe haue doted; now, by many cunning windings, Satan riſes vp to that tentation, & preuailes; that ſhall be done for a colour of guiltineſſe, whreof the ſoule would haue hated to be immediately guilty; Euen thoſe, that find a iuſt horrour, in leaping downe from ſome hie tower, yet may be perſwaded to deſcend by ſtayres to the bottome. Hee knowes not where hee ſhall ſtay, that hath willingly

willingly slipt into a knowne wickednesse.

How many doth an eminent offender draw with him into euill? It could not be, but that diuers of the attendants both of *Dauid* and *Bathsheba* must be conscious to that adultery; Great mens sinnes are seldome secret; And now *Ioab* must bee fetcht in, as accessary to the murder: How must this example needes harden *Ioab* against the conscience of *Abners* blood? Whiles he cannot but thinke, *Dauid* cannot auenge that in me, which he acteth himselfe.

Honor is pretended to poore *Vriah*, death is meant. This man was one of the worthies of *Dauid*;

uid; their courage ſought glory in the difficulteſt exploits: That reputation had neuer bene purchaſed without attempts of equall danger; Had not the leader and followers of *Vriah* beene more trecherous, then his enemies were ſtrong, hee had comne off with victory; Now, he was not the firſt or laſt that periſhed by his frends. *David* hath forgotten, that himſelfe was in like ſort betrayed in his maſters intention, vpon the dowry of the Philiſtim-foreskins. I feare to aske, Who euer noted ſo foule a plot in *Davids* reiected predeceſſour? *Vriah* muſt be the meſſenger of his owne death, *Ioab* muſt be a traytor

for to his frend, the hoſt of God muſt ſhamefully turne their backs vpon the Ammonites, all that Iſraelitiſh blood muſt bee ſhed, that murder muſt bee ſeconded with diſſimulation, and all this to hide one adultery. O God thou hadſt neuer ſuffered ſo deare a fauorite of thine to fall ſo fearefully, if thou hadſt not meant to make him an vniuerſall example to mankinde; of not preſuming, of not deſpayring; How can wee preſume of not ſinning, or deſpaire for ſinning, when we finde ſo great a Saint thus fallen, thus riſen.

Na-

Nathan and Dauid.

YEt *Bathsheba* mourned for the death of that husband, who she had bene drawn to dishonor: How could shee bestowe teares enow vpon that funerall, whereof her sinne was the cause? If shee had but a suspicion of the plot of his death, the fountaines of her eyes could not yeild water enough to wash off her husbands blood; Her sin was more worthy of sorrow, then

hen her losse. If this griefe had eene right placed, the hope of iding her shame, and the ambition to be a Queene had not so soone mittigated it; neither had she vpon any termes beene drawne into the bed of her husbands murtherer. Euery gleame of earthly comfort can drye vp he teares of worldly sorrow. *Bathsheba* hath soone lost her griefe at the Court; The remembrance of an husband is buryed in the iollity and state of a Princesse. *Dauid* securely injoyes his ill-purchased loue, and is content to exchange the conscience of his sinne, for the sense of his pleasure. But the iust and holy God will not put it vp so;

hee

he that hates ſinne ſo much the more, as the offender is more deare to him, will let *Dauid* feele the bruiſe of his fall. If Gods beſt children haue beene ſometimes ſuffered to ſleep in a ſin, at laſt he hath awakened them in a fright.

Dauid was a Prophet of God, yet he hath not only ſtept into theſe foule ſinnes, but ſoiourned with them; If any profeſſion or ſtate of life could haue priuiledged from ſinne; the Angels had not ſinned in heauen, nor man in Paradiſe: *Nathan* the Prophet is ſent to the Prophet *Dauid*, for reproofe, for conuiction; Had it beene any other mans caſe, none could haue

beene

one more quick-sighted then the Princely Prophet, in his owne he is so blinde, that God is fayne to lend him others eyes. Euen the Phisition himselfe when he is sicke, sends for the counsell of those whom his health did mutually ayde with aduise. Let no man think himselfe too good to learne; Teachers themselues may be taught that in their owne particular, which in a generality they haue often taught others; It is not only ignorance that is to be remoued, but mis-affection.

Who can prescribe a iust period to the best mans repentance? About ten moneths are passed since *Dauids* sinne; in all which

which time I finde no newes o
any ſerious compunction; I
could not be but ſome glaunce
of remorſe muſt needes hau
paſſed thorough his Soule long
ere this; but a due and ſolemn
contrition was not heard of til
Nathans meſſage; and perhaps
had bene further adiourned, i
that Monitor had beene longer
deferred; Alas, what long and
dead ſleepes may the holyeſt
Soule take in fearefull ſinnes;
Were it not for thy mercy, O
God, the beſt of vs ſhould end
our ſpirituall lethargie in a ſleep
of death:

It might haue pleaſed God as
eaſily to haue ſent *Nathan* to
check *Dauid* in his firſt purpoſe
of

of ſinning; So had his eyes beene reſtrayned, *Bathſheba* honeſt, *Vriah* aliue with honor; now the wiſdome of the Almighty knew how to winne more glory by the permiſſion of ſo foule an euill, then by the preuention; yea, he knew how by the permiſſion of one ſinne, to preuent millions; how many thouſand had ſinned in a vaine preſumption on their owne ſtrength, if *Dauid* had not thus offended; how many thouſand had deſpayred in the conſcience of their owne weakeneſſes, if theſe horrible ſinnes had not receiued forgiueneſſe. It is happie for all times, that wee haue ſo holy a ſinner, ſo ſinfull a penitent

nitent; It matters not how bitter the pill is, but how well wrapped; so cunningly hath *Nathan* conueyed this dose, that it begins to worke ere it bee tasted; there is no one thing wherin is more vse of wisdome, then the due contriuing of a reprehension, which in a discreet deliuery helps the disease, in an vnwise, destroyes nature.

Had not *Nathan* bene vsed to the possession of *Dauids* eare; this complaint had beene suspected. It well beseemes a King to take information by a Prophet. Whiles wise *Nathan* was querulously discoursing, of the cruell rich-man that had forceably taken away the only Lambe

Lambe of his poore neighbour, how willingly doth *Dauid* liſten to the ſtory, and how ſharply (euen aboue law) doth he cenſure the fact? *As the Lord liueth the man that hath done this thing ſhall ſurely dye.*) Full little did he thinke that he had pronounced ſentence againſt himſelfe; It had not bene ſo heauy, if he had knowne on whom it ſhould haue light; We haue open eares & quick tongues to the vices of others; How ſeuere Iuſticers we can be to our very owne crimes in others perſons? how flattering paraſites to anothers crime in our ſelues? The life of doctrine is in application; *Nathan* might haue beene long enough

in his narration, in his inuectiue, ere *Dauid* would haue bene touched with his owne guiltineſſe; but now that the Prophet brings the word home to his boſome, he cannot but be affected. Wee may take pleaſure, to heare men ſpeake in the clouds, we neuer take profit till we finde a propriety in the exhortation, or reproofe; There was not more cunning in the parable, then courage in the application (*Thou art the man*) If *Dauid* be a King, hee may not look, not to heare of his faults; Gods meſſages may be no other then vnpartial. It is a treacherous flattery in diuine errands to regard greatneſſe: If Prophets

must

must be mannerly in the forme, yet in the matter of reproofe, resolute: The words are not their owne, They are but the Heralds of the King of heauen, *Thus saith the Lord God of Israel.*

How thunder-striken do we thinke *Dauid* did now stand? how did the change of his colour bewray the confusion in his Soule; whiles his conscience said the same within, which the Prophet sounded in his eare? And now least ought should be wanting to his humiliation, all Gods former fauours shall bee layd before his eyes, by way of exprobration: He is worthy to be vpbraided with mercies, that hath abused mercyes vnto wan-

tonneſſe; whiles we doe well, God giues and ſayes nothing, when we doe ill, hee layes his benefits in our diſh, and caſts them in our teeth, that our ſhame may bee ſo much the more; by how much our obligations haue bene greater. The bleſſings of God in our vnworthy caryage proue but the aggrauations of ſinne, and additions to iudgement.

I ſee all Gods children falling into ſinne, ſome of them lying in ſinne; none of them maintayning their ſinne; *Dauid* cannot haue the hart, or the face to ſtand out againſt the meſſage of God, but now as a man confounded, and condemned in him-

himselfe, hee cryes out in the bitternesse of a wounded Soule, (*I haue sinned against the Lord*) It was a short word, but passionate; and such as came from the bottome of a contrite hart; The greatest griefes are not most verball: *Saul* confessed his sinne more largely, lesse effectually; God cares not for phrases, but for affections. The first peece of our amends to God for sinning, is the acknowledgement of sinne; He can do little that in a iust offence cannot accuse himselfe: If we cannot be so good as we would, it is reason we should do God so much right, as to say, how euill we are. And why was not this don soo-

ner? It is ſtrange to ſee how eaſily ſin gets into the hart, how hardly it gets out of the mouth; Is it becauſe ſinne, like vnto Satan, where it hath got poſſeſſion is deſirous to hold it; and knowes that it is fully ejected by a free confeſſion? or, becauſe in a guiltineſſe of deformity, it hides it ſelfe in the breſt where it is once intertained, and hates the light? or becauſe the tongue is ſo fee'd with ſelfe-loue, that it is loath to bee drawne vnto any verdict againſt the hart, or hands? or, is it out of an idle miſpriſion of ſhame, which whiles it ſhould bee placed in offending, is miſplaced in diſcloſing of our offence? How-

Howeuer, ſure I am, that God hath need euen of racks to draw out confeſſions, and ſcarce in death it ſelfe, are we wrought to a diſcouery of our errors.

There is no one thing, wherin our folly ſhewes it ſelfe more, then in theſe hurtfull concealements: Contrary to the proceedings of humane Iuſtice, it is with God, *Confeſſe and liue*; no ſooner can *Dauid* ſay, *I haue ſinned*, then *Nathan* infers, *The Lord alſo hath put away thy ſin.* He that hides his ſins ſhall not proſper, but hee that confeſſeth and forſaketh them, ſhall finde mercy. Who would not accuſe himſelfe, to be acquitted of God? O God, who would not tell his wicked-

wickednes to thee, that knowst it better then his owne heart, that his heart may bee eased of that wickednesse, which being not told, killeth? Since we haue sinned, why should we be niggardly of that action, wherein wee may at once giue glory to thee, and releefe to our soules?

Dauid had sworne in a zeale of Iustice, that the rich Oppressour, for but taking his poore neighbours lambe, should dye the death; God, by *Nathan*, is more fauourable to *Dauid*, then to take him at his word; *Thou shalt not dye*: O the maruellous power of repentance; Besides adultery, *Dauid* had shed the bloud of innocent *Vriah*; The

strict

ſtrict law was eye for tye, tooth for tooth; He that ſmiteth with the ſword, ſhall periſh with the ſword; Yet, as if a penitent confeſſion had diſpenſed with the rigor of Iuſtice, now God ſaies, *Thou ſhalt not dye.* *Dauid* was the voyce of the Law, awarding death vnto ſin; *Nathan* was the voyce of the Goſpell, awarding life vnto the repentance for ſin. Whatſoeuer the ſore bee, neuer any ſoule applyed this remedy, and dyed; neuer any ſoule eſcaped death, that applyed it not.

Dauid himſelfe ſhall not dye for this fact; but his miſ-begotten childe ſhall dye for him; He that ſayd, *The Lord hath put away thy ſin,* yet ſayd alſo, *The ſword ſhall not*

not depart from thine house.

The same mouth, with one breath, pronounces the sentence both of absolution, and death. Absolution to the person, death to the issue. Pardon may well stand with temporall afflictions. Where God hath forgiuen, though he doe not punish, yet he may chastize, and that vnto bloud; neither doth he alwaies forbeare correction, where hee remits reuenge. So long as he smites vs not as an angry Iudge, wee may indure to smart from him, as a louing father.

Yet euen this rod did *Dauid* deprecate with teares: how faine would he shake off so easie a lode? The childe is stricken; the

e father fasts and prayes, and
eepes, and lyes all night vpon
e earth, and abhors the noyse
comfort; That childe, which
as the fruit and monument of
s odious adultery, whom hee
ould neuer haue looked vpon,
ithout a recognition of his
n; in whose face he could not
ut haue still read the records
his own shame, is thus mour-
ed for, thus sued for; It is easie
obserue that good man ouer-
assionately affected to his chil-
ren. Who would not haue
hought, that *Dauid* might haue
eld himselfe well appayd, that
is soule escaped an eternall
eath, his body a violent:
hough God should punish his
sin,

ſin, in that childe, in whom he ſinned: Yet euen againſt thi croſſe, he bends his prayers, as i nothing had been forgiuenhim There is no childe that woul be ſcourged, if he might eſcap for crying; No affliction is fo the time other then greeuous neither is therfore yeelded vnto without ſome kinde of reluctation. Far yet was it from the heart of *Dauid*, to make any oppoſition to the will of God; he ſued, he ſtrugled not; There i no impatience in entreaties; He wel knew, that the threats of temporal euils, ran commonly with a ſecret condition, and therfor might perhaps bee auoyded by humble importunity: If any meanes

meanes vnder Heauen can auert
udgements, it is our prayers.
God Could not chuſe, but
ke well the boldneſſe of *Da-*
ds faith, who after the appre-
enſion of ſo heauy a diſplea-
ure, is ſo far from doubting of
he forgiueneſſe of his ſin, that
ee dares become a Sutor vnto
God for his ſicke childe. Sinne
oth not make vs more ſtrange,
hen faith, confident.
But, it is not in the power of the
rongeſt faith, to preſerue vs
om all afflictions; After all
Davids prayers and teares, the
hilde muſt dye. The carefull
ruants dare but whiſper this
d newes: They, who had
ound their Maſter ſo auerſe
from

from the motion of comfort, in the ſickneſſe of the childe, fea red him vncapable of comfor in his death.

Suſpition is quick-witted Euery occaſion makes vs mi doubt that euent, which we feare; This ſecrecy proclaymes that which they were ſo loth to vtter; *Dauid* perceiues his childe dead, and now he riſes vp from the earth whereon hee lay, and waſhes himſelfe, and changeth his apparrell, and goes firſt into Gods houſe to worſhip, and then into his owne to eat; now he refuſes nō comfort, who be fore would take none; The iſſue of things doth more fully ſhew the will of God, then the predi

ction

ction; God neuer did any thing, but what hee would; hee hath ſometimes foretold that for triall, which his ſecret will intended not; hee would foretell it, hee would not effect it, becauſe hee would therfore foretell it, that he might not effect it; His predictions of outward euils are not alwayes abſolute, his actions are; *Dauid* well ſees by the euent, what the decree of God was, concerning his childe; which now he could not ſtriue againſt, without a vaine impatience; Till wee know the determinations of the Almighty, it is free for vs to ſtriue in our prayers; to ſtriue with him, not againſt him; when once

wee know them, it is our duty to ſit downe in a ſilent contentation;

(*Whiles the childe was yet aliue, I faſted and wept, for I ſayd, Who can tell whether the Lord will bee gracious to mee, that the childe may liue, but now hee is dead, Wherefore ſhould I faſt? Can I bring him backe againe?*)

The greefe that goes before an euill for remedy, can hardly bee too much, but that which followes an euill, paſt remedy, cannot bee too little: Euen in the ſaddeſt accident, death, we may yeeld ſomething to nature, nothing to impatience: Immoderation of ſorrow, for loſſes paſt hope of recouery, is

more

more sullen, then vse-full; our stomach may be bewrayed by it, not our wisdome.

(***)

T 2 *Amnon*

Amnon and Tamar.

IT is not possible, that any word of God should fall to the ground: *David* is not more sure of forgiuenesse, then smart: Three maine sins passed him in this businesse of *Vriah*; Adultery, murder, dissimulation: for all which, he receiues present payment, for adultery, in the deflouring of his daughter *Thamar*; for murder, in the killing of his son *Amnon*; for dissimulation in the

the contriuing of both. Yet all this was but the beginning of euils. Where the father of the family, brings ſinne home to the houſe, it is not eaſily ſwept out: Vnlawfull luſt propagates it ſelfe by example; How iuſtly is *Dauid* ſcourged by the ſin of his ſons, whom his act taught to offend?

Maacah was the daughter of an Heatheniſh King; By her, had *Dauid* that beautifull, but vnhappy iſſue; *Abſalom*, and his no leſſe faire ſiſter, *Thamar*: Perhaps, thus late doth *Dauid* feele the puniſhment of that vnfit choyce: I ſhould haue maruelled, if ſo holy a man had not found croſſes in ſo vn-

equall a match, either in his person, or at least in his seed.

Beauty, if it be not well disciplin'd, proues not a frend, but a traytour; three of *Dauids* children are vndone by it at once; What els was guilty of *Amnons* incestuous loue, *Thamars* rauishment, *Absaloms* pride? It is a blessing to bee faire, yet such a blessing, as if the soule answer not to the face, may lead to a curse; How commonly haue we seene the foulest soule dwell fairest? It was no fault of *Thamars*, that she was beautifull; the candle offends not in burning, the foolish flye offends in scorching it selfe in the flame; yet it is no small misery to become a ten-

tation

ation vnto another; and to be made but the occaſion of others ruine. *Amnon* is loue-ſicke of his ſiſter *Tamar*, and languiſhes of that vnnaturall heat. Whither will not wanton luſt, carry the inordinate mindes of pampered and vngouerned youth; None but his halfe-ſiſter, will pleaſe the eyes of the young Prince of Iſrael: Ordinary pleaſures will not content thoſe, whom the conceit of greatneſſe, youth, and eaſe, haue let looſe to their appetite.

Perhaps, yet this vnkindely flame might, in time, haue gone out alone; had not there beene a *Ionadab*, to blow theſe coles with ill counſell. It were ſtrange, if

great Princes ſhould want ſome paraſiticall followers, that are ready to feede their ill humours. *Why art thou, the Kings ſon ſo leane from day to day?* As if it were vnworthy the heyre of a King, to ſuffer either law, or conſcience, to ſtand in the way of his deſires: Whereas wiſe Princes know well, that their places giue them no priuiledge of ſinning: but call them in rather to ſo much more ſtrictneſſe, as their example may be more preiudiciall.

Ionadab was the cozen german of *Amnon*, Ill aduiſe is ſo much more dangerous, as the intereſt of the giuer is more. Had he been a true freind, he had

bent

ent all the forces of his diſſwa-
ſion, againſt the wicked moti-
ons of that ſinfull luſt; and had
ewed the Prince of Iſrael how
much thoſe lewd deſires prouo-
ked God, and blemiſhed him-
ſelfe; and had lent his hand to
ſtrangle them in their firſt con-
ception. There cannot bee a
more worthy improuement of
friendſhip, then in a feruent op-
poſition to the ſinnes of them,
whom wee profeſſe to loue:
No enemy can be ſo mortall to
great Princes, as thoſe officious
clients, whoſe flattery ſoothes
them vp in wickedneſſe; Theſe
are traytors to the Soule, and by
a pleaſing violence kill the beſt
part eternally.

How

How redy at hand is an euill ſuggeſtion? Good counſell is like vnto well water, that muſt be drawne vp with a Pumpe, or bucket; Ill counſell is like to Conduit-water, which if the cocke be but turned, runs out alone; *Ionadab* hath ſoone projected how *Amnon* ſhall accompliſh his lawleſſe purpoſe. The way muſt bee to fayne himſelfe ſicke in body, whoſe minde was ſicke of luſt; and vnder this pretence to procure the preſence of her, who had wounded, and only might cure him.

The daily-increaſing languor, and leaneneſſe, and paleneſſe of loue-ſicke *Amnon* might well giue colour to a kercheife,

and

a pallet. Now it is ſoone
old *Dauid* that his eldeſt Sonne
caſt vpon his ſickebed; there
eeds no ſuit for his viſitation;
he carefull father haſtens to
is bed-ſide, not without
oubts and feares: He that was
ately ſo afflicted with the ſick-
eſſe of a childe that ſcarce liued
o ſee the light, how ſenſible
uſt we needs thinke he would
e, of the indiſpoſition of his
ſt borne Sonne, in the prime
of his age and hopes; It is not
iuen to any Prophet to foreſee
ll things; Happy had it beene
or *Dauid*, if *Amnon* had beene
uly ſicke, and ſick vnto death;
et who could haue perſwaded
his paſſionate father to haue
beene

beene content with this ſucceſ-
ſion of loſſes, this early loſſe o
his ſucceſſor: How glad is he
to heare, that his daughter *Ta-*
mars skill might be likely to fi
the dyet of ſo deare a patient
Conceit is wont to rule much
both in ſickneſſe, and the cure.
Tamar is ſent by her father to
the houſe of *Ammon*; Her hand
only muſt dreſſe that diſh,
which may pleaſe the nice Pa-
late of her ſicke brother. Euen
the children of Kings, in thoſe
homelyer times, did not ſcorne
to put their fingers, to ſome
workes of huſwifrie: (*She tooke*
floure and did knead it, and did make
cakes in his ſight, and did bake the
cakes, and tooke a paune, and powred
them

out before him.) Had ſhe not
ene ſometimes vſed to ſuch
omeſtique imployments, ſhee
d bene now to ſeeke; neither
d this bene required of her,
ut vpon the knowledge of her
kill: She doth not plead, the
mpayring of her beauty by
e ſcorching of the fire; nor
inkes her hand too dainty for
ch meane ſeruices; but fettles
o the worke, as one that had
ther regard the neceſſities of
er brother, then her owne
ate: Only pride and idleneſſe,
aue baniſht honeſt and thrifty
iligence, out of the houſes of
e great.

This was not yet the diſh that
Amnon longed for. It was the
Cooke,

Cooke, and not the cates which that wanton eye affected. Vn lawfull acts seeke for secrecy The company is dismissed; T *mar* only stayes; Good meanin suspects nothing; Whiles she presents the meat she had prep red, to her sicke brother, he selfe is made a pray to his outr gious lust. The modest virgi intreats, and perswades in vain she layes before him the sinne the shame, the danger of th fact; and since none of thes can preuaile, faine would wi time by the suggesting of vn possible hopes; Nothing bu violence can stay a resolued sin ner; What he cannot by intrea ty, he will haue by force. If th

Diuel

Diuell were not more ſtrong in
men, then nature, they would
neuer ſeeke pleaſure in violence.
Amnon hath no ſooner fulfilled
his beaſtly deſires, then he hates
Tamar more then he loued her.
Inordinate luſt neuer ends but
in diſcontentment; Loſſe of
ſpirits, and remorſe of ſoule
make the remembrance of that
act tedious, whoſe expectation
promiſed delight. If we could
ſee the back of ſinfull pleaſures,
ere wee behold their face, our
harts could not but bee forſtal-
led with a iuſt deteſtation. Bru-
tiſh *Amnon*, it was thy ſelfe
whom thou ſhouldſt haue ha-
ted for this villany; not thine
innocent ſiſter; Both of you
lay

lay together, only one commi
ted inceſt: What was ſhe but
patient, in that impotent fury o
luſt? How vniuſtly doe carna
men miſ-place their affections
No man can ſay whether tha
loue, or this hatred were mor
vnreaſonable: Fraud drew *Tha-*
mar into the houſe of *Amnon*
force intertained her within
and droue her out. Faine would
ſhe haue hid her ſhame where
was wrought, and may not be
allowed it; That roofe vnde
which, ſhee came with honor
and in obedience and loue, may
not be lent her for the time as
ſhelter of her ignominy. Neue
any ſauage could be more bar-
barous: *Shechem* had rauiſhe
Dinah

Dinah, his offence did not make her odious; his affection so continued, that he is willing rather to draw blood of himselfe and his people, then forgoe her whom he had abused; *Amnon* in one houre is in the excesse of loue and hate; and is sicke of her, for whom he was sicke; She that lately kept the keyes of his hart, is now lockt out of his doores. Vnruly passions runne euer into extremities, and are then best apayd, when they are furthest off from reason and moderation.

What could *Amnon* thinke, would be the euent of so foule a fact, which as he had not the grace to preuent, so he hath not

the care to conceale? If he look not ſo hie as heauen, what could he imagine would follow here-vpon, but the diſpleaſure of a father, the danger of law, the indignation of a brother, the ſhame and out-cryes of the world; All which hee might haue hoped to auoyd by ſecreſie, and plauſible courſes of ſatisfaction. It is the iuſt iudgement of God vpon preſumptuous offenders, that they loſe their wit, together with their honeſty; and are either ſo blinded, that they cannot fore-ſee the iſſue of their actions, or ſo beſotted that they doe not regard it.

Poore *Thamar* can but bewaile that

that which ſhe could not keepe, her virginty, not loſt, but torne from her by a cruell violence: She rends her princely robe, and layes aſhes on her head, and laments the ſhame of anothers ſinne; and liues more deſolate then a widdow, in the houſe of her brother *Abſalom.*

In the meane time, what a coroſiue muſt this newes needs be to the heart of good *Dauid*, whoſe fatherly command had out of loue, caſt his daughter into the iawes of this Lyon? What an inſolent affront muſt hee needs conſtrue this, to bee offred by a Sonne to a father; that the father ſhould be made the Pandar of his owne daugh-

ter to his ſonne? He that lay vpon the ground weeping for, but the ſicknes of an infant, how vexed doe wee thinke he was with the villany of his heyre, with the rauiſhment of his daughter, both of them worſe then many deaths? What reuenge can he thinke of, for ſo haynous a crime leſſe then death; and what leſſe then death is it to him, to thinke of a reuenge? Rape was by the law of God, capitall, how much more, when it is ſeconded with inceſt? Anger was not puniſhment enough for ſo hye an offence; Yet this is all that I heare of, from ſo indulgent a father, ſauing that he makes vp the reſt with

with ſorrow; puniſhing his ſons outrage in himſelfe; The better-naturd, and more gracious a man is, the more ſubiect he is to the danger of an ouer remiſſeneſſe, and the exceſſe of fauour and mercy: The milde iniuſtice is no leſſe perilous to the common-wealth, then the cruell.

If *Dauid* (perhaps out of the conſcience of his owne late offence) will not puniſh this fact, his ſonne *Abſalom* ſhall: not out of any care of iuſtice, but in a deſire of reuenge. Two whole yeares, hath this ſlie Courtier ſmothered his indignation, and fayned kindeneſſe; els his inuitation of *Amnon* in ſpeciall, had

beene ſuſpected. Euen gallant *Abſalom* was a great ſheep-maſter; The brauery and magnificence of a Courtier, muſt bee built vpon the grounds of frugality; *Dauid* himſelfe is bidden to this bloody ſheep-ſhearing; It was no otherwiſe meant, but that the fathers eyes, ſhould be the witneſſes, of the tragicall execution of one ſon by another; Only *Dauids* loue kept him from that horrible ſpectacle: He is carefull not to be chargeable to that ſon, who cares not to ouer-charge his fathers ſtomach with a feaſt of blood.

Amnon hath ſo quite forgot his ſinne, that hee dares goe to feaſt in that houſe where *Tamar*

was

was mourning; and ſuſpects not the kindenes of him, whom he had deſerued, of a brother to make an enemy; Nothing is more vnſafe to be truſted, then the faire looks of a feſtered hart: Where true charity or iuſt ſatiſfaction, haue not wrought a ſound reconciliation, malice doth but lurk for the opportunity of an aduantage.

It was not for nothing, that *Abſalom* deferred his reuenge; which is now ſo much the more exquiſite, as it is longer protracted: What could be more fearefull, then when *Amnons* hart was merry with wine, to be ſuddenly ſtriken with death? As if this execution had bene no leſſe

intended to the Soule, then to the body; How wickedly soeuer this was done by *Absalom*, yet how iust was it with God, that he, whom in two yeares impunity would finde no leasure of repentance, should now receiue a punishment without possibility of repentance.

O God, thou art righteous to reckon for those sinnes, which humane partiality or negligence hath omitted, and whiles thou punishest sinne with sin, to punish sinne with death; If either *Dauid* had called *Amnon* to account for this villany, or *Amnon* had called himselfe, the reuenge had not beene so desperate, Happy is the man that by an

n vnfayned repentance ac-
uits his ſoule from his known
ils, and improues the dayes
f his peace to the preuention
f future vengeance; which if
be not done, the hand of God
all as ſurely ouertake vs in
iudgement, as the hand of
Satan hath ouertaken
vs in miſcariage
vnto ſin.
(***)

Abſaloms

Abſaloms returne and conſpiracy.

ONE act of iniuſtice drawes on another; The iniuſtice of *Dauid*, in not puniſhing the rape of *Amnon*, procures the iniuſtice of *Abſalom*, in puniſhing *Amnon* with murder: That which the father ſhould haue iuſtly reuenged, and did not; the ſon reuenges vniuſtly; The rape of a ſiſter was no leſſe worthy of death; then the murder

of

a brother; Yea, this latter ſin s therefore the leſſe, becauſe t brother was worthy of ath, though by another hand; hereas that ſiſter was guilty nothing but modeſt beauty: the that knew this rape paſſed uer (whole two yeeres) with npunity, dares not truſt the ercy of a father, in the pardon his murder; but for three yeers, des his head in the Court of s Grand-father, the King of eſhur. Doubtleſſe, that hea-eniſh Prince gaue him a kinde elcome, for ſo meritorious a uenge of the diſhonour done his owne loynes. No man n tell, how *Abſalom* ſhould ue ſped from the hands of his other-

otherwiſe ouer-indulgent F
ther, if he had beene apprehe
ded in the heat of the fact. Eue
the largeſt loue may bee oue
ſtrayned, and may giue a fall i
the breaking; Theſe feareſu
effects of lenity, might perha
haue whetted the ſeuerity of D
uid, to ſhut vp theſe outrages i
bloud; Now this diſpleaſu
was weakned with age: Tim
and thoughts haue digeſted thi
hard morſell; *Dauids* heart tol
him, that his hands had a ſha
in this offence; that *Abſalom* di
but giue that ſtroke, which him
ſelfe had wrongfully forborne
that the vnrecouerable loſſe o
one ſon, would bee but wofull
releiued with the loſſe of ano
ther

; Hee therefore, that in the
wes of the deceased infant
uld change his clothes, and
sh himselfe, and cheere vp
spirits, with the resoluti-
of, *I shall goe to him, he shall not*
rne to mee, comforts himselfe
ncerning *Amnon*; and begins
long for *Absolom*.

Those three yeeres banish-
ent seemed not so much a pu-
shment to the son, as to the fa-
er; Now *Dauid* begins to for-
ue himselfe; yet out of his
sdome, so inclines to fauour,
at he conceales it; and yet so
nceales it, that it may bee de-
ryed by a cunning eye; If hee
d cast out no glances of affe-
tion, there had beene no hopes
for

for his *Absalom*, if hee had ma
profession of loue after so fou
an act, there had beene no safe
for others; now hee lets fall
much secret grace, as may bo
hold vp *Absalom* in the life of h
hopes, and not hearten the pr
sumption of others.

Good eyes see light thoro
the smallest chinke; The wit
Ioab hath soone discerned *Dauid*
reserued affection; and know
how to serue him in that whic
hee would, and would not a
compliſh: and now deuises ho
to bring into the light, th
birth of desire, wherof he kne
Dauid was both big, and ash
med. A woman of Tekoa
(that sex hath beene euer he
mor

ore apt for wiles) is ſuborned
perſonate a mourner, and to
that, by way of parable,
hich in plaine termes would
ne ſounded too harſhly; and
ow whiles ſhe lamentably laies
rth the loſſe & danger of her
ons, ſhe ſhewes *Dauid* his owne;
nd whiles ſhe moues compaſ-
ion to her pretended iſſue, ſhee
wins *Dauid* to a pitty of him-
lfe, and a fauourable ſentence
or *Abſalom*. We loue our ſelues
etter then others, but wee ſee
thers better then our ſelues;
who ſo would perfectly know
is owne caſe, let him view it in
nothers perſon.

Parables ſped well with *Da-*
id; One drew him to repent of
his

Parables.

his owne ſin; another, to remi
Abſaloms puniſhment; And now
as glad to heare this plea, an
willing to bee perſwaded vnt
that, which if he durſt, he woul
haue ſought for, he gratifies *Ioa*
with the grant of that ſui
which *Ioab* more gratified hi
in ſuing for; *Goe bring againe th*
young man Abſalom.

How glad is *Ioab*, that he
hath light vpon one act, fo
which the Sunne, both ſettin
and riſing, ſhould ſhine vpo
him? and now he ſpeeds to Ge
ſhur, to fetch back *Abſalom* to Ie
ruſalem: he may bring the long-
baniſhed Prince to the City; bu
to the Court hee may not bring
him. (*Let him turne to his owne*
houſe

house, and let him not see my face.)
The good King hath so smarted with mercy; that now hee is resolued vpon austerity; and will relent but by degrees; It is enough for *Absalom* that hee liues, and may now breathe his natiue ayre; *Dauids* face is no obiect for the eyes of a murtherer: What a Dearling this son was to his father, appeares in that, after an vnnaturall and barbarous rebellion, passionate *Dauid* wishes to haue changed liues with him; yet now, whiles his bowels yearned, his brow frowned; The face may not be seen, where the heart is set. The best of Gods Saints may be blinded with affection; but when they

ſhall once ſee their errors, they are carefull to correct them. Wherfore ſerues the power of Grace, but to ſubdue the inſolencies of nature? It is the wiſdome of parents, as to hide their hearts from their beſt children, ſo to hide their countenances from the vngracious: Fleſhly reſpects may not abate their rigor to the ill deſeruing. For the childe to ſee all his fathers loue, it is enough to make him wanton, and of wanton, wicked: For a wicked childe, to ſee any of his fathers loue, it emboldens him in euill, and drawes on others.

Abſaloms houſe is made his priſon; Iuſtly is he confined to the

the place which hee had ſtained with blood; Two yeeres doth hee liue in Ieruſalem, without the happineſſe of his fathers ſight; It was enough for *Dauid* and him, to ſee the ſmoke of ech others chimnies. In the meane time, how impatient is *Abſalom* of this abſence? Hee ſends for *Ioab*, the Solicitor of his returne; So hard an hand, doth wiſe and holy *Dauid* carry ouer his reduction ſonne, that his frendly Interceſſor, *Ioab*, dares not viſit him. Hee, that afterwards kindled that ſeditious fire ouer all Iſrael, ſets fire now on the field of *Ioab*; whom loue cannot draw to him, feare and anger ſhall; Continued diſpleaſure hath made

Absalom desperate; Fiue yeeres are passed, since hee saw the face of his father; and now he is no lesse weary of his life, then of this delay; (*Wherefore am I come downe from Geshur? It had beene better for mee, to haue beene there still: Now therefore let mee see the Kings face, and if there bee any iniquity in me, let him kill me*) Either banishment, or death, seemed as tolerable to him, as the debarring of his fathers sight. What a torment shall it bee to the wicked to be shut out for euer, from the presence of a God, without all possible hopes of recouery? This was but a father) of the flesh by whom, if *Absalom* liued at first, yet in him he liued not, yea

no

not without him onely, but against him that ſon found hee could liue; God is the Father of Spirits, in whom wee ſo liue, that without him can be no life, no being; to bee euer excluded from him, in whom wee liue and are, what can it be but an eternall dying, an eternall periſhing? If in thy preſence, ô God, be the fulnes of ioy, in thine abſence, muſt needs be the fulnes of horror and torment; Hide not thy face from vs, ô Lord, but ſhew vs the light of thy countenance, that we may liue, and praiſe thee.

Euen the fire of *Ioabs* field, warmed the heart of *Dauid*, whiles it gaue him proofe of the

heat of *Absaloms* filiall affection. As a man therefore inwardly weary of so long displeasure, at last hee receiues *Absalom* to his sight, to his fauour; and seales his pardon with a kisse: Naturall parents, know not how to retaine an euerlasting anger towards the fruit of their loynes; how much lesse shall the God of mercies, be vnreconcileably displeased with his owne; and suffer his wrath to burne like fire that cannot be quenched? Hee will not alwayes chide, neither will he keepe his anger for euer; His wrath endureth but a moment, in his fauour is life; weeping may endure for a night, but ioy commeth in the morning.

Absalom

Abſalom is now as great, as faire; beauty and greatneſſe make him proud; pride works his ruine; Great ſpirits will not reſt content with a moderate proſperity: Ere two yeeres bee run out, *Abſalom* runs out into a deſperate plot of rebellion; None but his owne father was aboue him in Iſrael; None was ſo likely, in humane expectation, to ſucceed his father; If his ambition could but haue contained it ſelfe for a few yeeres, (as *Dauid* was now neere his period) dutifull carrige might haue procured, that by ſucceſſion, which now he ſought by force. An aſpiring minde is euer impatient, and holds Time it ſelfe

an enemy, if it thruſt it ſelfe importunately betwixt the hopes and fruition: Ambition is neuer but in trauell, and can finde no intermiſſion of painefull throwes, till ſhee haue brought forth her abortiue deſires: How happy were we, if our affectation could be ſo eager of ſpiritual and heauenly promotions; Oh that my ſoule could finde it ſelfe ſo reſtleſſe, till it feele the weight of that crowne of glory.

Outward pompe, and vnwonted ſhews of magnificence, are wont much to affect the light mindes of the vulgar. *Abſalom* therefore to the incomparable comelineſſe of his perſon, addes the vnuſuall ſtate of a more-

more-then-princely equipage. His Charets rattle, and his horſes trample proudly in the ſtreets; Fifty foot-men runne before their glittering maſter, Ieruſalem rings of their glorious Prince; and is ready to adore theſe continuall triumphs of peace. Exceſſe and nouelty, of expenſiue brauery and oſtentation in publique perſons, giues iuſt cauſe to ſuſpect either vanity, or a plot; True-harted *Dauid* can miſdoubt nothing in him, to whom hee had both giuen life, and forgiuen death: Loue conſtrued all this, as meant to the honor of a fathers Court, to the expreſſion of ioy and thankfulnes for his reconcilement:

The

The eyes and tongues of men are thus taken vp; now hath *Absalom* laid snares for their hearts also; *Hee rises early, and stands beside the way of the gate*; Ambition is no niggard of her paynes; seldome euer is good meaning so industrious; The more hee shined in beauty and royall attendance, so much more glory it was to neglect himselfe, and to prefer the care of iustice to his owne ease; Neither is *Absalom* more painefull then plausible; his eare is open to all plaintiues, all petitioners: there is no cause Which he flatters not, *See thy matters are good and right*; his hand flatters euery commer with a salutation, his lips

lips with a kiſſe. All men, all matters are ſoothed, ſauing the ſtate and gouernment; the cenſure of that is no leſſe deep, then the applauſe of all others, (*There is none deputed of the King to heare thee.*) What inſinuations could be more powerfull; No muſick can be ſo ſweet to the eares of the vnſtable multitude, as to heare well of themſelues, ill of their gouernours; *Abſalom* needs not to wiſh himſelfe vpon the Bench; Euery man ſayes, Oh what a curteous Prince is *Abſalom*? What a iuſt and carefull ruler would *Abſalom* be? How happy were wee, if wee might bee iudg'd by *Abſalom*? Thoſe qualities which are wont ſingle to

to grace others, haue conſpired to meet in *Abſalom*; goodlines of perſon, magnificence of ſtate, gracious affability, vnwearied diligence, humility in greatnes, feeling pitty, loue of iuſtice, care of the Commonwealth; The world hath not ſo complete a Prince as *Abſalom*; Thus the harts of the people are not won, but ſtolne by a cloſe traytor from their lawfully-anointed Soueraigne. Ouer-faire ſhowes are a iuſt argument of vnſoundnes; no naturall face hath ſo cleare a white and red, as the painted: Nothing wants now but a cloke of religion, to perfect the trechery of that vngracious Sonne, who carryed

peace

peace in his name, warre in his hart: and how easily is that put on? *Absalom* hath an holy vow to be paid in Hebron; The deuout man had made it long since, whiles hee was exiled in Syria, and now hee hasts to performe it, (*If the Lord shall bring me backe againe to Ierusalem, then I will serue the Lord*;) wicked hypocrites, care not to play with God that they may mock men. The more deformed any act is, the fayrer visor it still seeketh.

How glad is the good old King, that he is blessed with so godly a Son; whom he dismisseth laden with his causeless blessings: What trust is there in flesh and blood when *Dauid* is not

not safe from his owne loynes? The conspiracy is now fully forged, there lacked nothing but this guilt of piety to win fauor and value in all eyes; and now it is a wonder, that but two hundred honest Citizens goe vp with *Absalom* from Ierusalem: The true-harted lie most open to credulity: How easie it is to beguile harmelesse intentions? The name of *Dauids* Son carryes them against the father of *Absalom*, and now these simple Israelites, are vnwittingly made loyall rebells. Their harts are free from a plot, and they meane nothing, but fidelity in the attendance of a traytor. How many thousands are thus ignorantly

ignorantly misled into the train of error; Their simplicity is as worthy of pitty, as their misguidance of indignation. Those that will suffer themselues to be carryed with semblances of truth and faithfulnesse, must needs be as farre from safety, as innocence.

Contem-

Contemplations VPON THE HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

The Second Booke:

Christ among the Doctors.
Christ Baptized.
Christ Tempted.
Simon Called.
The Mariage in Cana.
The good Centurion.

TO THE HONORABLE GENERALL Sir EDWARD CECILL Knight, all honor and happines.

Most Honored Sir,

THE store of a good Scribe is (according to our Saviour) both old and new; I would (if I durst) be ambitious of this onely honor; having therefore drawne forth these not-frivolous thoughts, out of the old Testament, I fetch these following from the new; God is the same in both; as the body differs not with the age of the late, with the change of robes: The old and new wine of holy Truth, came both out of one vineyard; yet heere may wee safely say to the word of his father, as hee said to the Bride-groome of Cana,

Thou haſt kept the beſt wine till the laſt; *The authority of both is equally ſacred, the vſe admits no leſſe difference, then is betwixt a Sauiour fore-ſhadowed, and come. The intermiſſion of thoſe military imployments, which haue won you iuſt honor, both in forraine nations, and at home, is in this only gainefull, that it yeilds you leaſure to theſe happy thoughts, which ſhall more fully acquaint you with him that is at once the God of hoſts, and the Prince of Peace: To the furtherance whereof theſe my poore labors, ſhall doe no thankeleſſe offices. In lieu of your noble fauors to me both at home, and where you haue merited command, nothing can be returned but humble acknowledgements, and harty prayers for the increaſe of your Honor, and all happines to your ſelfe, and your thrice-worthy and vertuous Lady, by him that is deepely obliged, and truely deuoted to you both.*

IOS: HALL.

CHRIST among the Doctors.

EVEN the ſpring ſhowes vs what we may hope for of the tree in Summer; In his nonage therfore, would our Sauiour giue vs a taſte of his future proofe, leaſt if his perfection ſhould haue ſhewed it ſelfe without warning to the world, it ſhould haue beene intertained with more wonder, then beleefe; now this act of

his Childe-hood ſhall prepare the faith of men by fore-expectation; notwithſtanding all this early demonſtration of his diuine graces, the incredulous Iewes could afterwards ſay, whence hath this man this wiſdome and great workes? What would they haue ſaid, if he had ſuddenly leapt forth into the cleare light of the world? The Sunne would dazle all eyes, if hee ſhould breake forth at his firſt riſing into his full ſtrength; now he hath both the day-ſtar to goe before him, and to bid men looke for that glorious body, and the liuely colours of the day, to publiſh his approch, the eye is comforted, not hurt by

by his appearance.

The Parents of Christ went vp yearely to Ierusalem at the feast of the Passouer; the law was onely for the males, I doe not finde the blessed virgin bound to this voyage, the weaker sexe receiued indulgence from God: yet shee knowing the spirituall profit of that iourney, takes paines voluntarily to measure that long way euery yeare; Piety regards not any distinction of sexes or degrees, nether yet doth Gods acceptation; rather doth it please the mercy of the highest, more to reward that seruice, which, though he like in all, yet out of fauour he will not impose vpon

all! It could not be but that she whom the holy ghost ouershadowed, should bee zealous of Gods seruice: those that will go no further then they are dragged in their religious exercises, are no whit of kinne to her whom all generations shall call blessed.

The childe Iesus in the minority of his age, went vp with his Parents to the holy solemnity, not this yeare onely, but in all likelyhood others also; hee in the power of whose Godhead, and by the motion of whose Spirit, all others ascended thither, would not himselfe stay at home. In al his examples he meant our Instruction: this pious

pious act of his nonage intended to lead our first yeares into timely deuotion. The first liquor seasons the vessell for a long time after: It is euery way good for a man, to beare Gods yoke euen from his Infancy: it is the policie of the deuill to discourage early holynes: hee that goes out betimes in the morning, is more like to dispatch his iourney, then he that lingers till the day bee spent. This blessed Family, came not to looke at the feast & be gone; but they duely stayd out all the appointed dayes of vnleauened bread: they and the rest of Israel could not want houshold businesses at home; those secular affaires

affaires could not either keepe them from repayring to Ierusalem, or send them away immaturely; Worldly cares must giue place to the sacred: Except wee will depart vnblessed, we must attend Gods seruices till wee may receiue his dismission:

It was the fashion of those times and places, that they went vp, and so returned by troupes; to those set meetings of their holy festiuals. The whole parish of Nazareth went and came together, Good-fellowship doth no way so well, as in the passage to Heauen: much comfort is added by society to that iourney, which is of it selfe pleasant; It is an happy word,

Come

Come let vs go vp to the house of the Lord: Mutual incouragement is none of the least benefits of our holy assemblies: Many sticks layd together, make a good fire, which if they lye single, lose both their light and heat.

The feast ended, what should they do, but return to Nazareth? Gods seruices may not bee so attended, as that wee should neglect our particular callings: Himselfe cals vs from his owne house to ours: and takes pleasure to see a painfull Client: They are fouly mistaken, that thinke God cares for no other trade, but deuotion: Piety & diligence must keep meet changes with

with each other; neither doth God leſſe acept of our returne to Nazareth, then our going vp to Ieruſalem.

I cannot thinke that the bleſſed Virgin, or good *Ioſeph*, could be ſo negligent of their diuine charge, as not to call the childe *Ieſus*, to their ſetting forth from Ieruſalem: But their backe was no ſooner turned vpon the Temple, then his face was towards it; hee had buſineſſe in that place, when theirs was ended: there hee was both worſhipped and repreſented: hee, in whom the God-head dwelt bodily, could do nothing without God: his true father led him away from his ſuppo-

ſed:

ed: Sometimes the affaires of our ordinary vocation, may not grudge to yeeld vnto ſpirituall occaſions: The Parents of Chriſt knew him well, to be of a diſpoſition, not ſtrange, nor ſullen and ſtoycall, but ſweet and ſociable: and therfore they ſuppoſed, he had ſpent the time and the way, in the company of their frends and neighbours: They doe not ſuſpect him wandred into the ſolitary fields, but when euening came, they go to ſeeke him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance: If hee had not wonted to conuerſe formerly with them, hee had not now beene ſought amongſt them: Neither as God, nor man doth

doth he take pleaſure in a ſterne froward auſterity, and wilde retiredneſſe: but in a milde affableneſſe, and amiable conuerſation.

But, ô bleſſed Virgin, who can expreſſe the ſorrowes of thy perplexed ſoule; when all that euening-ſearch could affoord thee no newes of thy Son *Ieſus*? Was not this one of thoſe ſwords of *Simeon*, which ſhould pierce thorow thy tender breſt? How didſt thou chide thy credulous neglect, in not obſeruing ſo precious a charge, and blame thine eyes, for once looking beſide this obiect of thy loue? How didſt thou, with thy careſull husband, ſpend that reſtleſſe night,

ight, in mutuall expoſtulati-
ns, and bemonings of your
ſſe? How many ſuſpicious
maginations did that while
cke thy greeued ſpirit? Per-
aps thou mightſt doubt, leſt
ey which layd for him, by
Herods command, at his birth,
d now by the ſecret inſtigati-
n of *Archelaus*, ſurprized him
his child-hood: or it may be,
ou thoughtſt thy diuine Son
d now withdrawne himſelfe
om the earth, and returned to
s heauenly glory, without
arning: or peraduenture, thou
udyedſt with thy ſelfe, whe-
er any careles on thy behalfe,
d not giuen occaſion to this
ſence.

Oh

Oh deare Sauiour, who can
D misse and not mourne for thee?
Neuer any soule conceiued thee
by faith, that was lesse afflicted
with the sense of thy dissertion,
then comforted with the ioy of
thy presence: Iust is that sor-
D row, and those teares seasona-
ble, that are bestowed vpon thy
losse; What comfort are we ca-
pable of, whiles we want thee?
What relish is there in these
earthly delights without thee?
What is there to mitigate our
passionate discomforts, if not
from thee? Let thy selfe loose,
ô my soule, to the ful-
nesse of sorrow, when thou fin-
dest thy selfe bereeued of him,
in whose presence is the fulnesse
of

of ioy, and deny to receiue com-
fort from any thing, ſaue from
his returne.

In vaine is Chriſt ſought a-
mong his kinred, according to
the fleſh: So far are they ſtill
from giuing vs their ayd, to find
the true *Meſſias*, that they lead vs
from him: Backe againe there-
fore are *Ioſeph* and *Mary* gone, to
ſeeke him at Hieruſalem; Shee
goes about in the City, by the
ſtreets, and by the open places,
and ſeekes him whom her ſoule
loueth: She ſought him, for the
time, and found him not. Doe
we thinke ſhe ſpared her ſearch,
the euening of her returne, ſhee
haſtes to the Inne, where ſhe laſt
left him; where miſſing him,

ſhee inquires of euery one ſhee met, Haue you not ſeene him, whom my ſoule loueth? At laſt, the third day, ſhee findes him in the Temple: One day was ſpent in the journey towards Galile; another in the returne to Ieruſalem: The third day recouers him: Hee, who would riſe againe the third day, and be found amongſt the liuing, now alſo would the third day bee found of his Parents, after the ſorrow of his abſence. But where wert thou, ô bleſſed *Ieſu*, for the ſpace of theſe three daies? Where didſt thou beſtow thy ſelfe, or who tended thee, whiles thou wert thus alone at Hieruſalem? I know, if Hieruſalem ſhould

should haue beene as vnkinde to thee, as *Bethlem*, thou couldst haue commanded the Heauens to harbour thee, and if men did not minister to thee, thou couldst haue commanded the seruice of Angels, but since the forme of a seruant, called thee to a voluntary homelinesse, whether it pleased thee to exercise thy selfe thus early, with the difficulties of a stranger, or to prouide miraculously for thy selfe; I inquire not, since thou reuealest not, only this I know, that hereby thou intendest to teach thy parents, that thou couldest liue without them, and that not of any indigency, but out of a gracious dispensation,

thou wouldst ordinarily depend vpon their care.

In the meane time, thy diuine wisdome could not but foreknow all these corroding thoughts, wherewith the heart of thy deare mother must needs bleed, through this sudden dereliction; yet wouldst thou leaue her for the time to her sorrow: Euen so, ô Sauior, thou thoughtest fit to visit her, that bore thee with this carely affliction; Neuer any loued thee, whom thou doest not sometimes exercise with the greefe of missing thee, that both we may be more carefull to hold thee, and more ioyfull in recouering thee. Thou hast sayd, and canst not lye, I

am

am with you to the end of the world: but euen whiles thou art really present, thou thinkest good to be absent vnto our apprehensions: yet if thou leaue vs, thou wilt not forsake vs; if thou leaue vs for our humiliation, thou wilt not forsake vs to our finall discomfort; thou mayst for three dayes hide thy selfe; but then wee shall finde thee in the Temple; None euer sought thee with a sincere desire, of whom thou wert not found: Thou wilt not bee either so little absent, as not to whet our appetites, nor so long, as to fainten the heart. After three dayes wee shall finde thee; and where should wee

rather hope to finde thee then in the Temple? There is the habitation for the God of Israel, there is thy resting place for euer; Oh all yee that are greeued with the want of your Sauiour, see where yee must seeke him: In vaine shall yee hope to finde him in the streets, in the Tauernes, in the Theaters, seek him in his holy Temple: Seeke him with piety, seeke him with faith, there shall yee meet him, there shall yee recouer him. Whiles children of that age were playing in the streets, Christ was found sitting in the Temple, not to gaze on the outward glory of that house, or on the golden Candle-sticks, or tables, but

to heare and appoſe the Doctors; Hee, who as God, gaue them all the wiſdome they had, as the Son of man hearkens to the wiſdom he had giuen them: He, who ſate in their hearts, as the Author of all learning and knowledge, ſets in the midſt of their ſchoole, as an humble Diſciple: That by learning of them, he might teach all the younger ſort humility, and due attendance vpon their Inſtructours, he could at the firſt haue taught the great Rabbins of Iſrael, the deepe myſteries of God; but becauſe hee was not yet called by his Father, to the publique function of a Teacher, hee contents to heare with diligence,

and to aske with modesty, & to teach onely by insinuation. Let those consider this, which will needes run as soone as they can go: and when they find ability, thinke they need not stay for a further vocation of God, or men; Open your eyes, yee rathe ripe Inuaders of Gods Chaire: and see your Sauior in his younger yeeres, not sitting in the eminent pulpits of the Doctors, but in the lowly floores of the Auditors: See him that could haue taught the Angels, listning in his minority, to the voyce of men; Who can think much, to learne of his Ancients, when he looks vpon the Son of God, sitting at the feet of the Doctors of Israel.

Israel. First he hears, thē he asks: how much more doth it concern vs to be hearers, ere we offer to be teachers of others; hee gathers that hears, he spēds that teacheth; if we spend ere we gather, we shall soon proue bankrupts. When he hath heard, he asks, and after that, hee answers: doubtlesse those very questions were instructions, and meant to teach more then to learne: Neuer had these great Rabbins heard the voyce of such a tutor: in whom they might see the wisdome of God so concealing it selfe, that yet it would bee knowne to be there: No marvell then if they all wondred at his vnderstanding and answers.

Their

Their eyes ſaw nothing but humane weakeneſſe, their eares heard diuine ſublimity of matter; betwixt what they ſaw, and what they heard, they could not but bee diſtracted with a doubting admiration. And why did ye not (ô ye Iewiſh teachers) remember *That to vs a Childe is borne, and vnto vs a Son is giuen, and the gouernment is vpon his ſhoulder, and his name ſhall bee called Wonderfull, Counſellor, the mighty God, the euerlaſting Father, the Prince of peace?* Why did ye not now bethinke your ſelues, what the ſtarre, the Sages, the Angels, the Shepheards, *Zachary, Simeon, Anna*, had premoniſhed you. Fruitleſſe is the wonder that

deth not in faith; No light is ficient where the eyes are d through vnbeliefe or pre-dice.

The Doctors were not more azed, to heare ſo profound a ilde-hood, then the parents of hriſt were to ſee him among e Doctors; the Ioy of finding im, did ſtriue with the aſto-ſhment of finding him thus, nd now, not *Ioſeph* (he knew ow little right he had to that ine Son) but *Mary* breakes rth into a louing expoſtulati-n (*Son why haſt thou dealt ſo with*) that ſhe might not ſeeme take vpon her as an imperi-us mother, it is like ſhe reſerued is queſtion till ſhee had him alone:

alone: Wherein ſhe meant r
a ther to expreſſe griefe then co
reption: Onely heerein th
bleſſed virgin offended, that h
inconſideration did not ſup
poſe (as it was) that ſome hy
reſpects, then could be due t
fleſh and bloud, called away th
Son of God from her, that wa
the daughter of man: She th
was but the mother of his hu
manity, ſhould not hau
thought that the buſines o
God muſt for her ſake bee neg
lected: Wee are all partiall t
our ſelues naturally, & pronet
the regard of our owne rights
queſtionleſſe this gracious ſain
would not for all the world
haue willingly preferd her ow

atten

ndance, to that of her God: ough heedlesnesse shee doth her Son and Sauiour is her nitor: out of his diuine loue orming her naturall: *How is at ye sought me? Knew ye not I must goe about my Fathers sse?* Immediately before blessed virgin had said, *thy her and I sought thee with heauy rts*: Wherein both according he supposition of the world, called *Ioseph* the father of ist, and according to the ion of a dutifull wife, shee nds her *Ioseph*, before her selfe. e well knew that *Ioseph* had hing but a name in this bu- es, she knew how God had nified her beyond him; yet,

she

ſhe ſaies: *Thy father and I ſoug*
thee; The Sonne of God ſtan
not vpon contradiction to h
mother, but leading h
thoughts from his ſuppoſed f
ther, to his true; from earth
heauen, he anſwers (*Knew ye n*
that I muſt goe about my Fathe
buſineſſe?) It was honor enoug
to her that hee had vouchſaf
to take fleſh of her; It was h
eternall honor, that hee w
God of God; the euerlaſtin
Son of the heauenly Father
good reaſon therefore was
D that, the reſpects to fleſh: ſhou
giue place to the God of Spirit
How well contented was ho
Mary with ſo iuſt an anſwe
how doth ſhe now again in h

har

rt, renew her answer to the
ngell (*Behold the seruant of the*
rd, be it according to thy word.
We are all the sonnes of God
another kinde. Nature and
e world thinkes wee should
end them; we are not wor-
y to say, we haue a Father in
auen, if we cannot steale a-
way from these earthly distra-
ctions, and imploy our
selues in the ser-
uices of our
God.

Contem-

Christs Baptisme.

IOHN did euery way fore-runne Christ, not so much in the time of his birth, as in his office; neither was there more vnlikenesse in their disposition and carriage, then similitude in their function; both did preach and baptise; only *Iohn* baptised by himselfe, our Sauiour by his disciples; our Sauiour wrought miracles by himselfe, by his disciples; *Iohn* wrought none by either;

either; Wherein Christ meant to shew himselfe a Lord, and *Iohn* a seruant; and *Iohn* meant to approue himselfe a true seruant to him, whose harbinger he was; hee that leapt in the wombe of his mother, when his Sauiour (then newly conceiued) came in presence, bestirred himselfe when hee was brought forth into the light of the Church, to the honor and seruice of his Sauiour: he did the same before Christ, which Christ charged his disciples to doe after him, preach and baptise. The Gospell ran alwayes in one tenor, and was neuer but like it selfe; So it became the word of him in whom there is

no ſhadow by turning, and whoſe word it is, *I am Iehoua, I change not.*

It was fit, that hee which had the Prophets, the ſtarre, the Angels to foretell his comming into the world, ſhould haue his Vſher to goe before him, when he would notifie himſelfe to the world; *Iohn* was the voyce of a Cryer, Chriſt was the word of his Father; it was fit this voyce ſhould make a noyſe to the world, ere the word of the Father ſhould ſpeake to it; *Iohns* note was ſtill, repentance; the axe to the root, the fan to the flowre, the chaffe to the fire; as his rayment was rough, ſo was his tongue, and if his food were wilde

wilde hony, his speech was stinging locusts: Thus must the way be made for Christ in euery hart: Plausibility is no fit preface to regeneration: if the hart of man had continued vpright, God might haue beene intertained without contradiction; but now violence must be offered to our corruption, ere we can haue roome for grace; if the great way-maker doe not cast downe hills, and rayse vp vallyes in the bosomes of men, there is no passage for Christ; neuer will Christ come into that soule, where the herald of repentance hath not beene before him.

That Sauiour of ours, who

from eternity lay hid in the counsell of God, who in the fulnes of time so came, that hee lay hid in the wombe of his mother, for the space of forty weekes; after hee was come, thought fit to lye hid in Nazareth, for the space of thirty yeares, now at last begins to shew himselfe to the world, and comes from Galile to Iordan. He that was God alwayes, and might haue beene perfect man in an instant, would by degrees rise to the perfection both of his manhood, and execution of his mediator-ship; to teach vs, the necessity of leasure in spirituall proceedings; that many suns, and successions of seasons, and

meanes

meanes must be stayd for, ere we can attaine our maturity; and that when we are ripe for the imployments of God, wee should no lesse willingly leaue our obscurity, then wee tooke the benefit of it for our preparation. He that was formerly circumcised, would now bee baptised; what is baptisme but an Euangelicall circumcision? what was circumcision but a legall baptisme? One both supplyed and succeeded the other; yet the author of both will vndergoe both; He would be circumcised to satisfie his Church that was, and baptised to sanctifie his Church that should bee; that so in both Testaments hee

might open away into heauen. There was in him neither filthines, nor fore-skin of corruption, that ſhould need either knife, or water; He came not to
D be a Sauiour for himſelfe, but for vs, we are all vncleaneneſſe, and vncircumciſion, he would therefore haue that done to his moſt pure body, which ſhould be of force to cleare our impure ſoules; thus making himſelfe ſinne for vs, that we might be made the righteouſnes of God in him.

His baptiſme giues vertue to
P ours. His laſt action (or rather paſſion) was his baptiſing with blood, his firſt was his baptization with water, both of them waſh

wash the world from their sins. Yea, this latter did not only wash the soules of men, but washeth that very water, by which wee are washed; from hence is that made both cleane and holy, and can both cleanse and hallow vs; And if the very hadkerchiefe which touched his Apostles, had power of cure, how much more that Water, which the sacred body of Christ touched? Christ comes far, to seeke his baptisme: to teach vs (for whose sake he was baptised) to wait vpon the ordinances of God; and to sue for the fauour of spirituall blessings; They are worthlesse commodities, that are not worth seeking for; it is

rarely ſeene, that God is found of any man vnſought for: that deſire which only makes vs capable of good things, cannot ſtand with neglect.

Iohn durſt not baptize vnbidden: his Maſter ſent him to doe this ſeruice, and behold the Maſter comes to his ſeruant, to call for the participation of that priuiledge, which he himſelfe had inſtituted, and enioyned; how willingly ſhould wee come to our ſpirituall Superiors, for our part in thoſe myſteries, which God hath left in their keeping; yea, how gladly ſhould wee come to that Chriſt, who giues vs theſe bleſſings; who is giuen to vs in them.

This

This seemed too great an honour for the modesty of *Iohn* to receiue; If his mother could say, when her blessed cozen the Virgin *Mary*, came to visit her (*whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?*) how much more might hee say so, when the diuine Son of that mother, came to call for a fauor from him? I haue neede to bee baptized of thee, and commest thou to me? O holy Baptist, if there were not a greater borne of women then thou; yet thou couldest not be borne of a woman, and not neede to be baptized of thy Sauiour. Hee baptized with fire, thou with water; little would thy water haue auailed

uailed thee without his fire, I
he had not baptized thee, how
wert thou ſanctified from the
wombe? There can be no fleſ
without filthineſſe; neither thy
ſupernaturall conception, no
thy auſtere life could exempt
thee from the need of baptiſme:
Euen thoſe, that haue not liued
to ſin after the ſimilitude of *A-*
dam, yet are they ſo tainted with
Adam, that vnleſſe the ſecond *A-*
dam clenſe them by his baptiſme
they are hopeleſſe; There is
no leſſe vſe of baptiſme vnto
all, then there is certainty of the
need of baptiſme; *Iohn* baptized
without; Chriſt within. The
more holy a man is, the more
ſenſible he is of his vnholineſſe;

No

carnall man could haue said
haue need to be baptized of thee;)
ither can he finde, what he is
better for a little Font-water.
he sence of our wretchednes,
nd the valuation of our spiri-
all helps, is the best tryall of
r regeneration: Our Sauiour
oth not deny, that either *Iohn*
athneed to be baptized of him,
rthatit is strange,that heshould
ome to be baptized of *Iohn*,but
e will needs thus far, both ho-
or *Iohn*,and disparage himselfe,
o be baptized of his Messenger;
hethat would take flesh of the
Virgin, education from his Pa-
ents, sustenance from his crea-
ures, will take baptisme from
hn: It is the prayse of his mer-
cy,

cy, that hee will ſtoope ſo low as to bee beholden to his creatures, which from him receiue their being and power, both to take and giue. Yet not ſo much reſpect to *Iohn*, as obedience to his Father, drew him to this poynt of humiliation, (*Thus it behooues vs to fulfill all righteouſneſſe.*) The counſels and appoyntments of God, are righteouſneſſe it ſelfe; There needs no other motiue, either to the ſeruant, or the Son, then the knowledge of thoſe righteous purpoſes. This was enough to lead a faithfull man thorow all difficulties and inconueniences; neither will it admit of any reply, or any demurre: *Iohn* yeel-

deth

th to this honour, which his
uiour puts vpon him, in gi-
ng baptisme to the Authour
f it: Hee baptized others to
e remission of their sinnes:
ow hee baptizes him by
em, they are remitted both
o the Baptizer, and to o-
hers.

No sooner is Christ baptized,
hen hee comes forth of the
ater: The element is of
rce, but during the vse: It
rnes common, when that is
ast, neither is the water soo-
er powred on his head, then
e Heauens are opened, and
e Holy Ghost descendeth
pon that head which was bap-
ized: The Heauens are neuer
shut,

shut, whiles either of the Sacra-
ments is duely administred, an
receiued: neither doe the He-
uens euer thus open without th
descent of the Holy Ghost: Bu
now that the God of Heauc
is baptized, they open vnto him
which are opened to all th
faithfull by him: and that Hol
Ghost which proceeded fro
him, together with the Father
ioynes with the Father in a sensi
ble testimony of him; that now
the world might see what inte
rest hee had in the Heauens, in
the Father, in the Holy Spirit,
and might expect nothing bu
diuine, from the enttance o
such a Mediator.

CHRIST

CHRIST tempted.

NO sooner is Christ comne out of the water of Baptisme, then he enters into the fire of Tentation: No sooner is the Holy Spirit descended upon his head, in the forme of a Doue, then hee is led by the Spirit to be tempted. No sooner doth God say (*This is my Son*) then Satan sayes, (*If thou bee the Son of God.*) It is not in the power, either of the gift or seales of Grace,

Grace, to deliuer vs from the assaults of Satan; they may haue the force to repell euill suggestions, they haue none to preuent them; yea, the more we are ingaged vnto God by our publique vowes, and his pledges of fauour, so much more busie and violent is the rage of that euill one, to encounter vs; Wee are no sooner stept forth into the field of God, then hee labours to wrest our weapons out of our hands, or to turne them against vs.

The voyce from Heauen, acknowledged Christ to bee the Son of God; this diuine Testimony did not allay the malice of Satan, but exasperate it: Now

that venomous Serpent ſwels with inward poyſon, and haſtes to aſſayle him, whom God hath honored from Heauen. O God, how ſhould I looke to eſcape the ſuggeſtious of that wicked one, when the Son of thy loue cannot bee free? when euen grace it ſelfe drawes on enmity? That Enemy, that ſpared not to ſtrike at the head, will he forbeare the weakeſt and remoteſt lim? Arme thou mee therefore, with an expectation of that euill I cannot auoyd, Make thou mee as ſtrong, as he is malicious; ſay to my ſoule alſo (*Thou art my Son*) and let Satan doe his worſt.

All the time of our Sauiours

obſcurity, I doe not finde him ſet vpon; Now, that hee looks forth to the publique execution of his diuine Office, Satan bends his forces againſt him: Our priuacy, perhaps, may ſit down in peace, but neuer man did endeauour a common good without oppoſition. It is a ſigne, that both the work is holy, & the Agent faithfull, when wee meet with ſtrong affronts.

We haue reaſon to bee comforted with nothing ſo much, as with reſiſtance; If we were not in a way to do good, we ſhould finde no rubs; Satan hath no cauſe to moleſt his owne, and that whiles they goe about his owne ſeruice; Hee deſires nothing

thing more, then to make vs smooth paths to ſin; but when we would turne our feet to holineſſe, hee blocks vp the way with tentations.

Who can wonder enough at the ſawcines of that bold Spirit, that dares to ſet vpon the Son of the euerliuing God? who can wonder enough at thy meekneſs & patience, ô Sauiour, that wouldſt be tempted? He wanted not malice and preſumption to aſſault thee, thou wantedſt not humility to endure thoſe aſſaults. I ſhould ſtand amazed at this voluntary diſpenſation of thine, but that I ſee the ſuſceptiō of our humane nature, layes bee open to this condition. It

is neceſſarily incident to manhood, to be liable to tentations; Thou wouldeſt not haue put no fleſh, if thou hadſt meant vterly to put off this conſequence of our infirmity: If the ſtate of innocence could haue beene any defence againſt euill motions, the firſt *Adam* had not been tempted, much leſſe the ſecond. It is not the preſenting of tentation that can hurt vs, but their entertainment. Ill counſell is the fault of the Giuer, not of the Refuſer; We cannot forbid leudeies to look in at our windowes, we may ſhut our dores againſt their entrance; It is no leſſe our praiſe to haue reſiſted, then Satans blame to ſuggeſt euill. Yea, ô bleſſed

Blessed Sauiour, how glorious was it for thee, how happy for vs, that thou wert tempted? Had not Satan tempted thee, how shouldest thou haue ouercome? Without blowes there can be no victory, no triumph: How had thy power been manifested; if no aduersary had tried thee? The first *Adam* was tempted & vanquished, the second *Adam*, to repay and repaire that foile, doth vanquish in being tempted. Now haue we got a Sauiour, and High-Priest, that cannot bee touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but such an one, as was in all things tempted in like sort, yet without sin; how boldly ther-

fore may we goe vnto the Throne of grace, that wee may receiue mercy, and finde grace of help in time of neede: Yea, this Deuil was for vs; Now we see by this conflict of our Almighty Champion, what manner of Aduersary we haue, how hee fights, how hee is resisted, how ouercomne. Now our very temptation affords vs comfort; in that wee see, the dearer we are vnto God, the more obnoxious we are to this trial; neither can wee be discouraged by the haynousnesse of those euils, wherto we are moued, since we see the Son of God solicited to Infidelity, Couetousnes, Idolatry; How glorious therfore was it

it for thee, ô Sauior, how happy for vs, that thou wert tempted?

Where then wast thou tempted, O blessed Iesu; or whither wentest thou to meet with our great aduersary? I doe not see thee led into the market-place, or any other part of the city, or thy home-sted of Nazareth, but into the vast wilderness, the habitation of beastes; a place that caryeth in it, both horror and oportunity; why wouldst thou thus retyre thy selfe from men, but as confident Champions are wont to giue aduantage of ground, or weapon, to their Antagonist, that the glory of their victory may be the greater: So wouldst thou, O Sauiour, in

this can but with our common enemy, yeeld him his owne tearmes for circumstances, that thine honour and his foyle may be the more; Solitarynesse is no small helpe to the speed of a tentation; Wo to him that is alone, for if he fall, there is not a second to lift him vp; Those that out of an affectation of holines seeke for solitude, in rocks and caues of the deserts, doe no other then runne into the mouth of the danger of tentation, whiles they thinke to avoyd it. It was enough for thee, to whose diuine power the gates of hell were weakenesse; thus to challenge the Prince of darknesse; Our care must be alwaies to

to eſchue all occaſions of ſpiri-
tuall danger; and (what we may)
to get vs out of the reach of
tentations.

But O the depth of the wiſ-
dome of God; How camſt thou
ô Sauiour, to be thus tempted?
That Spirit whereby thou waſt
conceiued, as man, and which
was one with thee and the Fa-
ther, as God, Led thee into the
wilderneſſe to bee tempted of
Satan; Whiles thou taughteſt
vs to pray to thy Father, *Lead vs
not into temptation*, thou meanteſt
to inſtruct vs, that if the ſame
Spirit lead vs not into this pe-
rilous way, we goe not into it;
We haue ſtill the ſame conduct;
Let the path bee what it will,
how

how can wee miſcarry in the hand of a Father. Now may we ſay to Satan as thou didſt vnto *Pilate*; *thou couldſt haue no power ouer me, except it were giuen thee from aboue*; The ſpirit led thee, it did not driue thee; heere was a ſweet inuitation, no compulſion of violence; So abſolutely conformable was thy wil to thy deity, as if both thy natures had but one volition; In this firſt draught of thy bitter potion, thy Soule ſaid in a reall ſubjection, *Not my will, but thy will be done*: We imitate thee, ô Sauiour, though we cannot reach to thee; All thine are led by thy Spirit; Oh teach vs to forget that we haue wils of our owne.

The

The ſpirit led thee; thine inuincible ſtrength did not animate thee into this combat vncalled, What doe we weakelings ſo far preſume vpon our abilities, or ſucceſſe, as that we dare thruſt our ſelues vpon temptations vnbidden, vnwarranted? Who can pitty the ſhip-wracke of thoſe Mariners, which will needs put forth, and hoiſe ſayles in a tempeſt?

Forty dayes did our Sauiour ſpend in the wilderneſſe, faſting, and ſolitary, all which time was worne out in temptation; how euer the laſt brunt, becauſe it was moſt violent, is only expreſſed; Now could not the Aduerſary complaine of diſad-

vantage,

vantage, whiles he had the full ſcope both of time and place to doe his worſt; And why did it pleaſe thee, ô Sauiour, to faſt forty dayes, and forty nights? vnleſſe as *Moſes* faſted forty daies at the deliuery of the law, and *Elias* at the reſtetution of the law; So thou thoughteſt fit at the accompliſhment of the law, and the promulgation of the Goſpell, to fulfill the time of both theſe tipes of thine, wherin thou intendedſt our wonder, not our imitation; Not our imitation of the time, though of the act. Heere were no faulty deſires of the fleſh, in thee to be tamed, no poſſibility of a freer and more eaſie aſcent of the ſoule

soule to God, that could be affected of thee, who wast perfectly vnited vnto God, but as for vs thou wouldest suffer death, so for vs, thou wouldst suffer hunger, that wee might learne by fasting, to prepare our selues for tentations: In fasting so long thou intendedst the manifestation of thy power; in fasting no longer, the truth of thy manhood; *Moses* and *Elias*, through the miraculous sustentation of God, fasted so long, without any question made of the truth of their bodies; So long therefore thou thoughtest good to fast, as by reason of these precedents, might be without preiudice of thine humanity;

ty, which if it ſhould haue pleaſed thee to ſupport, as thou couldſt, without meanes, thy very power might haue opened the mouth of cauills againſt the verity of thine humane nature; That thou mighteſt therfore well approue, that there was no difference betwixt thee and vs, but ſinne; thou that couldſt haue faſted without hunger, and liued without meate; wouldſt both feed, and faſt, and hunger.

Who can be diſcouraged with the ſcantneſſe of frends, or bodily prouiſions, when hee ſees his Sauiour thus long deſtitute of all earthly comforts, both of ſociety and ſuſtenance. Oh the

policie

olicie and malice of that old
erpent, when he ſees Chriſt be-
ray ſome infirmity of nature
in being hungry, then he layes
oreſt at him by tentations; His
ye was neuer off from our Sa-
iour, all the time of his ſeque-
ration; and now that he thinks
he eſpies any one part to lye o-
pen, he driues at it with all his
might; We haue to doe with
an aduerſary, no leſſe vigilant
then malicious; who will bee
ſure to watch all opportunities
of our miſchiefe, and where he
ſees any aduantage of our
weakeneſſe, will not neglect it.
How ſhould we ſtand vpon our
guard for preuention; that both
we may not giue him occaſi-
ons,

ons, of our hurt, nor take hurt by thoſe we haue giuen.

When our Sauiour was hungry, Satan temptes him in matter of food; not then, of wealth or glory; He well knowes both what bayts, to fiſh withall, and when, and how to lay them; How ſafe and happy ſhall wee be, if we ſhall bend our greateſt care where we diſcerne the moſt danger?

In euery tentation there is an appearance of good; whether of the body, or minde, or eſtate; The firſt is the luſt of the fleſh, in any carnall deſire, the ſecond the pride of hart, and life; the third the luſt of the eyes; To all theſe, the firſt *Adam* is tempted, and

and in all miſcarryed; the ſecond *Adam* is tempted to them all, and ouercommeth; The firſt man was tempted, to a carnall appetite by the forbidden fruit, to pride by the ſuggeſtion of being as God; To couetouſneſſe, in the ambitious deſire of knowing good and euill; Satan hauing found all the motions ſo ſucceſſ-full with the firſt *Adam* in his innocent eſtate, will now tread the ſame ſteps in his temptations of the ſecond; The ſtones muſt bee made bread; there is the motion to a carnall appetite; The gard and attendance of Angels muſt bee preſumed on, there is a motion to pride; The kingdomes of the

earth, and the glory of them must be offered, there, to couetousnes and ambition.

Satan could not but haue heard God say, *This is my welbeloued Son*, he had heard the message and the Caroll of the Angels; he saw the Starre, and the iourney, and offrings, of the Sages, he could not but take notice of the gratulations of *Zachary*, *Simeon*, *Anna*; he well knew the predictions of the Prophets; yet now that hee saw Christ fainting with hunger, as not comprehending how infirmities could consist with a Godhead, he can say, (*If thou bee the Son of God*;) Had not Satan knowne that the Son of God was

was to come into the world, he had neuer ſaid (*If thou be the Son of God*) His very ſuppoſition conuinces him; The ground of his tentation, anſwers it ſelfe; If therefore Chriſt ſeemed to be a meere man, becauſe after forty dayes he was hungry, why was he not confeſſed more then a man, in that for forty daies he hungred not? The motiue of the tentation is worſe then the motion, (*If thou be the Son of God*) Satan could not chooſe another ſuggeſtion of ſo great importance. All the worke of our redemption, of our ſaluation, depends vpon this one truth, Chriſt is the Son of God; How ſhould hee elſe haue ranſomed

the world, how ſhould he haue done, how ſhould he haue ſuffered that, which was ſatisfactory to his fathers wrath? how ſhould his actions, or paſſion beene valuable to the ſinnes of all the world? What maruell is it if we that are ſonnes by adoption, be aſſaulted with the doubts of our intereſt in God, when the naturall Son, the Son of his eſſence is thus tempted? Since all our comfort conſiſts in this point, heere muſt needes bee laid the chiefe battery; and heere muſt be placed our ſtrongeſt defence.

To turne ſtones into bread, had beene no more faulty in it ſelfe, then to turne water into wine;

wine: But to doe this in a diſtruſt of his Fathers prouidence, to abuſe his power and liberty in doing it, to worke a miracle of Satans choyce, had beene diſagreeable to the Son of God: There is nothing more ordinary with our ſpirituall enemy, then by occaſion of want to moue vs to vnwarrantable courſes; Thou art poore, ſteale; Thou canſt not riſe by honeſt meanes, vſe indirect; How eaſie had it beene for our Sauiour, to haue confounded Satan by the power of his Godhead? But he rather chooſes to vanquiſh him by the ſword of the Spirit, that he might teach vs how to reſiſt and ouercome the powers of

darkneſſe? If hee had ſubdued Satan by the almighty power of the deity, wee might haue had what to wonder at, not what to imitate; now hee vſeth that weapon, which may be familiar vnto vs, that he may teach our weakeneſſe how to be victorious; Nothing in heauen or earth can beat the forces of hell, but the word of God; How carefully ſhould wee furniſh our ſelues with this powerfull munition; how ſhould our hearts and mouthes bee full of it? *Teach mee O Lord the way of thy ſtatutes; O take not from mee the words of Truth; Let them bee my ſongs in the houſe of my pilgrimage; So ſhall I make anſwer to my blaſphemers.*

phemers. What needed Christ to haue answered Satan at all, if it had not beene to teach vs, that tentations must not haue their way; but must be answered by resistance; and resisted by the word.

I doe not heare our Sauiour auerre himselfe to bee a God; against the blasphemous insinuation of Satan; neither doe I see him working this miraculous conuersion, to proue himselfe the Son of God; but most wisely hee takes away the ground of the tentation; Satan had taken it for granted, that man cannot be sustayned without bread; and therefore infers the necessity of making bread of

ſtones; Our Sauiour ſhewes him from an infallible word, that he had miſlaied his ſuggeſtion; That man liues not by vſuall food only, but by euery word that proceedeth from the mouth of God; Hee can either ſuſtaine without bread, as hee did *Moſes* and *Elias*, or with a miraculous bread, as the Iſraelites with Manna, or ſend ordinary meanes miraculouſly, as foode to his Prophet by the Rauens, or miraculouſly multiply ordinary meanes, as the meale and oyle to the Sareptan widdow: All things are ſuſtained by his almighty word: Indeed we liue by food, but not by any vertue that is in it without God;

without

without the concurrence of whose prouidence, bread would rather ~~choke~~, then nourish vs; Let him withdrawe his hand from his creature; in their greatest abundance we perish; Why doe we therefore bend our eyes on the meanes, and not looke vp to the hand that giues the blessing?

What so necessary dependance hath the blessing vpon the creature, if our ptayers hold them not together; As we may not neglect the meanes, so wee may not neglect the procurement of a blessing vpon the meanes, nor bee vnthankefull to the hand that hath giuen the blessing.

In

In the firſt aſſault, Satan moues Chriſt to doubt of his fathers prouidence, and to vſe vnlawfull meanes to help himſelfe: in the next, he moues him to preſume vpon his Fathers protection, and the ſeruice of his bleſſed Angels; He grounds the firſt vpon a conceit of want, the next of abundance; If he be in extremes, it is all to one end, to miſlead vnto euill: If wee cannot be driuen downe to deſpaire, he labours to lift vs vp to preſumption; It is not one foile that can put this bold ſpirit out of countenance: Tentations, like waues, breake one in the necke of another; Whiles wee are in this warre-fare, wee muſt

must make account, that the repulse of one tentation doth but inuite another.

That blessed Sauiour of ours, that was content to be led from Iordan into the wildernes, for the aduantage of the first tentation, yeelds to be led from the wilderneſſe to Ieruſalem, for the aduantage of the ſecond; The place doth not a little auaile to the act: The wilderneſſe was fit for a tentation, ariſing from want, it was not fit for a tentation mouing to vain-glory. The populous City was the fitteſt for ſuch a motion; Ieruſalem was the glory of the world, the Temple was the glory of Ieruſalem, the pinacles, the higheſt peece

peece of the Temple, there is
c Christ content to be set for the
opportunity of tentation: O
Sauiour of men, how can wee
wonder enough at this hu-
mility of thine, that thou
wouldst so farre abase thy selfe,
as to suffer thy pure and sacred
body to bee transported by the
presumptuous and malicious
hand of that vnchaste spirit? It
was not his power, it was thy
patience, that deserues our ad-
miration; Neither can this seem
ouer-strange to vs, when wee
consider, that if Satan bee the
d head of wicked men, wicked
men are the members of Satan;
What was *Pilate*, or the Iewes
that persecuted thineinnocence,
but

but lims of this Diuell? and why are we then amazed, to see thee touched, and locally transported by the head, when wee see thee yeelding thy selfe ouer, to be crucified by the members? If Satan did the worse, and greater, mediately by their hands, no maruell if hee doe the lesse and easier, immediately by his own, yet neither of them without thy voluntary dispensation. Hee could not haue looked at thee, without thee; And if the Son of God, did thus suffer his owne holy and precious body, to bee carried by Satan, what wonder is it, if that Enemy haue sometimes power giuen him, ouer the sinfull bodies of the adopted Sons

Sons of God. It is not the
ſtrength of faith, that can ſecure
vs from the outward violences
of that euill One; This diffe-
rence I finde betwixt his ſpiri-
tuall and bodily aſſaults: thoſe
are beaten backe by the ſhield
of faith, theſe admit not of
ſuch repulſe; As the beſt
man may bee lame, blinde, diſ-
eaſed, ſo through the permiſſion
of God, he may be bodily vexed
by that olde Man-ſlayer; Grace
was neuer giuen vs for a target
againſt externall afflictions.

Me thinkes I ſee Chriſt, hoy-
ſed vp on the higheſt battle-
ments of the Temple; whoſe
very roofe was an hundred and
thirty cubits high; and Satan
ſtanding

standing by him with this speech in his mouth; Well then, since in the matter of nourishment, thou wilt needes depend vpon thy Fathers prouidence, that he can without meanes sustaine thee, take now further triall of that prouidence, in thy miraculous preseruation; Cast thy selfe down from this height; Behold, thou art here in Ierusalem, the famous and holy City of the world; here thou art, on the top of the pinacle of that Temple, which is dedicated to thy Father, and, if thou be God, to thy selfe; the eyes of all men are now fixt vpon thee, there cannot be deuised a more ready way to spred thy glory, and to pro-

proclaime thy Deity, then by
caſting thy ſelfe headlong to the
earth. All the world will ſay
there is more in thee, then a
man; and for danger, there can
bee none; What can hurt him
that is the Son of God? and
wherefore ſerues that glorious
Guard of Angels, which haue
by diuine commiſſion, taken vp-
on them the charge of thine hu-
manity? ſince therefore in one
act, thou mayſt bee both ſafe,
and celebrated, truſt thy Father,
and thoſe thy ſeruiceable ſpirits
with thine aſſured preſeruation,
Caſt thy ſelfe downe: And why
didſt thou not, ô thou malig-
nant ſpirit, endeauour to caſt
downe my Sauiour, by thoſe
ſame

ſame preſumptuous hands, that brought him vp, ſince the deſcent is more eaſie then the raiſing vp? was it for that, it had not beene ſo great an aduantage to thee, that hee ſhould fall by thy meanes, as by his owne? falling into ſinne, was more then to fall from the pinacle; ſtill thy care and ſute is, to make vs Authours to our ſelues of euill; thou gaineſt nothing by our bodily hurt, if the ſoule be ſafe: Or was it rather for that, thou couldſt not? I doubt not, but thy malice could as well haue ſerued, to haue offered this meaſure to himſelfe, as to his holy Apoſtle ſoone after, but he that bounded thy power,

tether'd thee ſhorter; Thou couldſt not, thou canſt not doe what thou wouldſt. Hee that would permit thee to carry him vp, binds thy hands from caſting him downe: And wo were it for vs if thou wert not euer ſtinted:

Why did Satan carry vp Chriſt ſo high, but on purpoſe, that his fall might bee the more deadly; ſo deales hee ſtill with vs, he exalts vs, that we may be dangerouſly abaſed; Hee puffs men vp with ſwelling thoughts of their owne worthineſſe, that they may bee vile in the eyes of God, and fall into condemnation: It is the manner of God, to caſt downe, that he may raiſe, to abaſe

base that he may exalt; Contrarily, Satan raises vp, that hee may throw downe, and intends nothing but our deiection, in our aduancement.

Height of place giues opportunity of tentation, Thus busie is that wicked one, in working against the members of Christ. If any of them bee in eminence aboue others, those hee labours most to ruinate; They had need to stand fast, that stand high; both there is more danger of their falling, and more hurt in their fall.

Hee that had presumed thus far, to tempt the Lord of life, would faine now draw him also to presume vpon his Deity;

If thou bee the Son of God, cast thy selfe downe. There is not a more tryed shaft in all his quiuer, then this; a perswasion to men, not to beare themselues too bold vpno the fauor of God; Thou art the Elect and Redemed of God; sin, because grace hath abounded, sin, that it may abound; Thou art safe enough, though thou offend, be not too much an aduersary to thine owne liberty: False Spirit, it is no liberty to sin, but seruitude rather, there is no liberty, but in the freedome from sin; Euery one of vs, that hath the hope of Sonnes, must purge himselfe, euen as hee is pure, that hath redeemed vs: Wee are bought

bought with a price, therefore muſt wee glorifie God in our bodies and ſpirits, for they are Gods; Our Son-ſhip teacheth vs awe and obedience, and therefore, becauſe we are Sons, we will not caſt our ſelues downe into ſin.

How idly doe Satan and wicked men meaſure God, by the crooked line of their owne miſconceit: Ywis, Chriſt cannot be the Son of God, vnleſſe hee caſt himſelfe downe from the pinacle; vnleſſe he come down from the Croſſe. God is not mercifull, vnles he humor them in all their deſires, not iuſt, vnleſſe hee take ſpeedy vengeance, where they require it; But when

they haue ſpent their folly vpon theſe vaine imaginations, Chriſt is the Son of God, though hee ſtay on the top of the Temple, God will bee mercifull, though wee miſcarry, and iuſt, though Sinners ſeeme lawleſſe. Neither will he be any other then he is, or meaſured by any rule, but himſelfe.

But what is this I ſee, Satan himſelfe with a Bible vnder his arme, with a Text in his mouth, *It is written, He ſhall giue his Angels charge ouer thee?* How ſtill in that wicked One doth ſubtilty ſtriue with preſumption? Who could not, but ouer-wonder at this, if hee did not conſider, that ſince the Deuill dared to touch the

ſacred

sacred body of Christ with his hand, hee may well touch the Scriptures of God with his tongue? Let no man henceforth maruell, to heare heretikes, or hypocrites, quote Scriptures, when Satan himselfe hath not spared to cite thē; what are they the worse for this, more then that holy body, which he transported? Some haue been poysoned, by their meats & drinks, yet either these nourish vs, or nothing: It is not the letter of the Scripture that can carry it, but the sence; if we diuide these two, wee prophane and abuse that word wee alledge. And wherfore doth this foule Spirit vrge a Text, but for imitation,

for preuention, and for ſucceſſe? Chriſt had alledged a Scripture vnto him, hee re-alledges Scripture vnto Chriſt: At leaſt wiſe, he will counterfet an imitation of the Son of God; Neither is it in this alone; what one act euer paſſed the hand of God, which Satan did not apiſhly attempt to ſecond? If we follow Chriſt in the outward action, with contrary intentions, wee follow Satan, in following Chriſt. Or, perhaps, Satan meant to make Chriſt hereby weery of this weapon; As wee ſee faſhions, when they are taken vp of the vnworthy. are caſt of by the great, It was doubtles, one cauſe, why Chriſt after-

afterwards forbad the Diuell euen to confesse the truth, because his mouth was a slander. But chiefely doth he this, for a better colour of his tentation: He guilds ouer this false mettall with Scripture, that it may passe currant; Euen now is Satan transformed into an Angel of light, and will seeme godly for a mischeife; If hypocrites make a faire show to deceiue with a glorious lustre of holinesse, we see whence they borrowd it: How many thousand soules are betrayd by the abuse of that word, whose vse is soueraigne and sauing. No diuell is so dangerous as the religious diuell. If good meate turne to the nourish

riſhment, not of nature, but of the diſeaſe, we may not forbeare to feed, but indeauour to purge the body of thoſe euill humors, which cauſe the ſtomach to worke againſt it ſelfe. O God, thou that haſt giuen vs light, giue vs cleare and ſound eyes, that we may take comfort of that light thou haſt giuen vs; Thy word is holy, make our hearts ſo, and then ſhall they finde that word, not more true then cordiall; Let not this diuine table of thine, bee made a ſnare to our ſoules.

What can be a better act then to ſpeake Scripture? It were a wonder if Satan ſhould doe a good thing well; He cites ſcripture

ure then, but with mutilation, and distortion; it comes not out of his mouth, but maymed and peruerted; One peece is left out, all misapplyed; Those that wrest or mangle Scripture for their owne turne, it is easie to see from what schoole they come. Let vs take the word from the author, not from the vsurper: *Dauid* would not doubt to eate that sheep, which hee pulled out of the mouth of the Beare or Lyon; (*Hee shall giue his Angels charge ouer thee:*) Oh comfortable assurance of our protection; Gods children neuer goe vnattended; Like vnto great Princes we walke euer in the midst of our guard; though inuisible, yet

yet true, carefull, powerfull; What creatures are ſo glorious as the Angels of heauen, yet their maker hath ſet them to ſerue vs: Our adoption makes vs at once great and ſafe; Wee may be contemptible and ignominious in the eyes of the world, but the Angels of God obſerue vs the while, and ſcorne not to wait vpon vs in our homelieſt occaſions; The Sun, or the light may wee keepe out of our houſes, the ayre we cannot; much leſſe theſe ſpirits, that are more ſimple and immateriall: No walls, no bolts, can ſeuer them from our ſides: they accompany vs in dungeons, they goe with vs into our exile;

How

How can wee either feare danger, or complaine of ſolitarineſſe, whiles we haue ſo vnſepe-rable, ſo glorious companions? Is our Sauiour diſtaſted with Scripture, becauſe Satan miſſaies it in his diſh? Doth he not rather ſnatch this ſword out of that impure hand, and beat Satan with the weapon which hee abuſeth; (*It is written, Thou ſhalt not tempt thy Lord thy God;*) The Scripture is one, as that God, whoſe it is; Where it carryes an appearance of difficulty or inconuenience, it needs no light to cleare it, but that, which it hath in it ſelfe. All doubts that may ariſe from it, are fully anſwered by collection; It is true that

that God hath taken this care, and giuen this charge of his owne; he will haue them kept, not in their ſinnes; they may truſt him, they may not tempt him; hee meant to incourage their faith, not their preſumption. To caſt our ſelues vpon an immediate prouidence, when meanes faile not, is to diſobey, in ſteed of beleeuing God; we may challenge God on his word, we may not ſtraine him beyond it; wee may make account of what he promiſed, we may not ſubiect his promiſes to vniuſt examinations; and where no need is, make triall of his power, iuſtice, mercie, by deuiſes of our owne. All the Diuels in

hel, could not elude the force
of this diuine answer; and now
Satan sees how vainely he tem-
pteth Christ to tempt God.

Yet againe for all this, doe I
see him setting vpon the Son of
God: Satan is not foyled when
he is resisted: neither diffidence,
nor presumption can fasten vp-
on Christ, he shall be tryed with
honor; As some expert Fencer
that challenges at all weapons,
so doth this great enemy; In
vaine shall we plead our skill in
some, if we faile in any; It must
be our wisdome to be prepared
for all kinde of assaults: As those
that hold townes and forts doe,
not only defend themselues
from incursions, but from the
Cannon

cannon and the Pioner; ſtill doth that ſubtil Serpent trauerſe his ground for an aduantage; The Temple is not hye enough for his next tentation; He therefore carryes vp Chriſt to the top of an exceeding high mountaine; All enemies in pitcht fields ſtriue for the benefit of the hill, or riuer, or winde, or ſunne; That which his ſeruant *Balac* did by his inſtigation, himſelfe doth now immediately, change places in hope of preuailing. If the obſcure country will not moue vs, hee tries what the Court can do; if not our home, the Tauerne, if not the field, our cloſet; As no place is left free by his malice, ſo no place muſt be

be made preiudiciall by our careleſneſſe; and as wee ſhould alwayes watch ouer our ſelues, ſo then moſt, when the oportunity carries cauſe of ſuſpicion.

Wherfore is Chriſt caryed vp ſo high but for proſpect? If the kingdomes of the earth and their glory, were only to be repreſented to his imagination; the valley would haue ſerued; If to the outward ſence, no hill could ſuffice; Circular bodyes though ſmal, cannot be ſeene at once. This ſhow was made to both, diuers kingdomes lying round about Iudea were repreſented to the eye; The glory of them to the imagination; Satan meant the eye could tempt the

fancy; no leſſe then the fancy could tempt the will. How many thouſand ſoules haue dyed of the wound of the eye; If we doe not let in ſinne at the window of the eye, or the dore of the eare, it cannot enter into our hearts.

If there bee any pompe, maieſty, pleaſure, brauery in the world, where ſhould it be but in the Courts of Princes, whom God hath made his Images, his deputies vpon earth? There is ſoft rayment, ſumptuous feaſts, rich Iewels, honorable attendance, glorious triumphs, royall ſtate, theſe Satan laies out to the faireſt ſhow: But oh the craft of that old Serpent; Many

a care attends greatneſſe; No creature is without thornes: High ſeats are neuer but vneaſie; all thoſe infinite diſcontentments, which are the ſhaddow of earthly ſoueraignety, he hides out of the way; nothing may bee ſeene, but what may both pleaſe and allure. Satan is ſtill and euer like himſelfe, If tentations might be but turnd about and ſhowne on both ſides, the kingdome of darkneſſe would not be ſo populous. Now whenſoeuer the Tempter ſets vpon any poore ſoule, all ſting of conſcience, wrath, iudgement, torment is concealed, as if they were not; Nothing may appeare to the eye but pleaſure,

profit, and a ſeeming happineſſe in the inioying our deſires; thoſe other wofull obiects are reſerued for the farewell of ſinne; that our miſery may bee ſeene and felt at once; When we are once ſure, Satan is a Tyrant, till then, he is a Paraſite: There can be no ſafety, if we do not view as well the backe as the face of tentations.

a

But oh preſumption and impudence, that hell it ſelfe may be aſham'd of; The Diuell dares ſay to Chriſt, *All theſe will I giue thee, if thou wilt fall downe and worſhip mee*; That beggerly ſpirit, that hath not an inch of earth, can offer the whole world to the maker; to the owner of it;

c

The

The slaue of God would be adord of his Creator; How can we hope he should be sparing of false boasts, and of vnreasonable promises vnto vs, when hee dares offer kingdomes to him by whom kings raigne?

Tentations on the right hand are most dangerous; how many that haue bene hardned with feare, haue melted with honor; There is no doubt of that soule that will not bite at the golden hooke.

False lyers and vaineglorious boasters, see the top of their pedigree; If I may not rather say, that Satan doth borrow the vse of their tongues for a time; Whereas faithfull is he that hath

promiſed; who will alſo doe it. Fidelity and truth is the iſſue of heauen.

If Idolatry were not a deare ſinne to Satan, he would not be ſo importunate to compaſſe it; It is miſerable to ſee how hee drawes the world inſenſibly into this ſin, which they profeſſe to deteſt; Thoſe that would rather hazard the furnace, then worſhip gold in a ſtatue, yet doe adore it in the ſtampe, and finde no fault with themſelues. If our hearts be drawne to ſtoope vnto an ouer-high reſpect of any creature, wee are Idolaters. O God, it is no maruell if thy ieloufie be kindled at the admiſſion of any of thine owne works into

into a competition of honor with their Creator.

Neuer did our Sauiour say, *Auoid Satan*, till now; It is a iust indignation, that is conceiued at the motion of a riuality with God; Neither yet did Christ exercise his diuine power in this command, but by the necessary force of Scripture, driues away that impure Tempter; *It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serue*: The rest of our Sauiours answers were more full and direct, then that they could admit of a reply, but this was so flat and absolute, that it vtterly daunted the courage of Satan, and put him to a shamefull flight, and

made him for the time, weary of his trade.

The way to bee rid of the troublesome solicitations of that wicked one, is continued resistance. Hee that forcibly droue the tempter from himselfe, takes him off from vs, and will not abide his assaults perpetuall; It is our exercise and triall, that hee intends, not our confusion.

(***)

Simon

Simon called.

AS the Sun in his firſt riſing, drawes all eies to it; So did this Sun of righteouſnes, when hee firſt ſhone forth into the world; His miraculous cures drew Patients, his diuine doctrine drew Auditors, both together drew the admiring multitude by troopes after him. And why doe wee not ſtill follow

low thee, ô Sauiour, thorow deſerts and mountaines, ouer land and ſeas, that wee may bee both healed, and taught. It was thy word, that when thou wert lift vp, thou wouldſt draw all men vnto thee; Behold, thou art lift vp long ſince, both to the tree of ſhame, and to the throne of heauenly glory, *Draw vs, and we ſhall run after thee*; Thy word is ſtill the ſame, though proclaimed by men, thy vertue is ſtill the ſame, though exerciſed vpon the ſpirits of men; Oh giue vs, to hunger after both, that by both, our ſoules may be ſatisfied.

I ſee the people, not onely following Chriſt, but preſſing vpon

pon him; euen very vnmannerlineſſe findes here both excuſe and acceptation; They did not keepe their diſtances in an awe to the Maieſty of the Speaker, whiles they were rauiſhed with the power of the ſpeech, yet did not our Sauiour checke their vnreuerent thronging, but rather encourages their forwardneſſe. Wee cannot offend thee, ô God, with the importunity of our deſires; It likes thee well, that the Kingdom of Heauen ſhould ſuffer violence. Our ſlackneſſe doth euer diſpleaſe theee, neuer our vehemence.

The throng of Auditors forced Chriſt to leaue the ſhore, and to make *Peters* ſhip his Pulpit;

pit; Neuer were there ſuch nets caſt out of that fiſher-boat before; whiles hee was vpon the land, he healed the ſicke bodies by his touch; now that he was vpon the ſea, he cured the ſicke ſoules by his doctrine; and is purpoſely ſeuered from the multitude, that hee may vnite them to him. Hee that made both ſea and land, cauſeth both of them to conſpire to the opportunities of doing good.

Simon was buſie, waſhing his nets: Euen thoſe nets that caught nothing, muſt bee waſhed, no leſſe then if they had ſped well: The nights toyle doth not excuſe his dayes work: Little did *Simon* thinke of leauing

uing thoſe nets, which hee ſo carefully waſhed, and now Chriſt interrupts him with the ſauour and bleſſing of his gracious preſence; Labour in our callings (how homely ſoeuer) makes vs capable of diuine benediction.

The honeſt Fiſher-man, when hee ſaw the people flocke after Chriſt, and heard him ſpeake with ſuch power, could not but conceiue a generall & confuſe apprehenſion of ſome excellent worth in ſuch a Teacher, and therefore is glad to honour his ſhip with ſuch a gueſt; and is firſt Chriſts hoſt by ſea, ere hee is his Diſciple by land; An humble and ſeruiceable entertainment

ment of a Prophet of God, was a good foundation of his future honour; Hee that would so easily lend Christ his hand, and his ship, was likely soone after to bestow himselfe vpon his Sauiour.

Simon hath no sooner done this seruice to Christ, then Christ is preparing for his reward; when the sermon is ended, the ship-roome shall bee payd for abundantly; Neither shall the Host expect any other pay-master then himselfe: *Launch forth into the deepe, and let downe your nets to make a draught*: That ship which lent Christ an opportunity of catching men vpon the shore, shall bee requited with

with a plentifull draught of fiſh in the deepe: It had beene as eaſie for our Sauiour, to haue brought the fiſh to *Peters* ſhip, cloſe to the ſhore, yet as chuſing rather to haue the ſhip carried to the ſhole of fiſh, hee bids (*Lanch forth into the deep*:) In his miracles, hee loues euer to meet nature in her bounds; and when ſhe hath done her beſt, to ſupply the reſt by his ouer-ruling power; The ſame power therefore, that could haue cauſed the fiſhes to leap vpon dry land, or to leaue themſelues forſaken of the waters, vpon the ſands of the Lake, will rather finde them in a place naturall to their abiding (*Lanch out into the deepe.*)

Rather

Rather in a desire to gratifie and obey his guest, then to pleasure himselfe, will *Simon* bestow one cast of his net; Had Christ enioyned him an harder taske, he had not refused; yet not without an allegation of the vnlikelyhood of successe, (*Master wee haue trauailed all night, and caught nothing; yet at thy word I will let downe the net.*

The night was the fittest time for the hopes of their trade; not vniustly might *Simon* misdoubt his speed by day, when hee had worne out the night in vnprofitable labour: Sometimes God crosseth the fayrest of our expectations, and giues a blessing to those times and means wher-

of

f we deſpayre. That paynes annot be caſt away which we reſolue to looſe for Chriſt.

Oh God, how many doe I ſee aſting out their netsin the great ke of the world, which in the whole night of their life haue aught nothing; They conceiue niſchiefe and bring forth iniquity; They hatch Cokatrices ggs, & weaue the ſpiders web; he that eateth of their egs dyeth, nd that which is troden vpon, reaketh out into a Serpent; Their webs ſhal be no garment, neither ſhall they couer themſelues with their labours.

Oh ye ſonnes of men, how long will e loue vanity and follow after lyes? et, if wee haue thus vainely

miſpent the time of our darkeneſſe; Let vs at the command of Chriſt, caſt out our new-waſhen nets; our humble and penitent obedience, ſhall come home laden with bleſſings, (*And when they had ſo done, they incloſed a great multitude of fiſhes, ſo that their net brake*:) What a difference there is betwixt our owne voluntary acts, and thoſe that are done vpon command; not more in the grounds of them, then in the iſſue? thoſe are oft-times fruitleſſe, theſe euer ſucceſsfull: Neuer man threw out his net at the word of his Sauiour, and drew it backe empty; who would not obey thee, ô Chriſt, ſince thou doſt ſo boun-

bountifully requite our weakeſt ſeruices?

It was not meere retribution that was intended in this euent, but inſtruction alſo: This act was not without a miſtery; He that ſhould be made a fiſher of men, ſhall in this draught foreſee his ſucceſſe; The kingdome of heauen is like a draw-net, caſt into the ſea, which when it is full men draw to land; The very firſt draught that *Peter* made after the complement of his Apoſtleſhip, incloſed no leſſe then three thouſand ſoules. Oh powerfull Goſpell, that can fetch ſinfull men from out of the depthes of naturall corruption: Oh happy ſoules, that from the

blinde and muddy cells of our wicked nature, are drawne forth to the glorious liberty of the ſonnes of God. *Simons* net breaks with the ſtore; Abundance is ſometimes no leſſe troubleſome then want; the net ſhould haue held, if Chriſt had not meant to ouer-charge *Simon* both with bleſſing and admiration: How happily is that net broken, whoſe rupture drawes the fiſher to Chriſt. Though the net brake, yet the fiſh eſcaped not; Hee that brought them thither to be taken, held them there till they were taken, (*They beckened to their partners in the other ſhip, that they ſhould come and help them*;) There are other ſhips in partner-

ſhip

ſhip with *Peter*, he doth not fiſh all the lake alone; There cannot be a better improuement of ſociety, then to helpe vs againe, to releeue vs in our profitable labours; to draw vp the ſpirituall draught into the veſſell of Chriſt, and his Church: wherfore hath God giuen vs partners, but that he ſhould becken to them for their ayd in our neceſſary occaſions? Neither doth *Simon* ſlacken his hand, becauſe he had aſſiſtants. What ſhall we ſay to thoſe lazie fiſhers, who can ſet others to the drag, whiles themſelues looke on at eaſe; caring onely to feede themſelues with the fiſh, not willing to wet their hands with the nett?

What ſhall wee ſay to this exceſſe of gaine? The nets breake, the ſhips ſinke with their burden: Oh happy complaint of too large a capture! O Sauiour, if thoſe Apoſtolicall veſſels of thy firſt rigging, were thus ouerlayd, ours flote and totter with an vnballaſted lightnes: Thou, who art no leſſe preſent in theſe bottoms of ours, lade them with an equall fraight of conuerted ſoules, and let vs prayſe thee for thus ſinking.

Simon was a skilful Fiſher, and knew well the depth of his trade, and now perceiuing more then Art or nature in this draught, hee fals downe at the knees of *Ieſus*, ſaying, (*Lord, goe from*

from mee, for I am a ſinfull man.) Himſelfe is caught in this net: He doth not greedily fall vpon ſo vnexpected and profitable a booty, but hee turnes his eyes from the draught to himſelfe, from the act to the Author, acknowledging vileneſſe in the one, in the other Maieſty; (*Goe from me Lord, for I am a ſinfull man.*)

It had beene pitty the honeſt Fiſher-man ſhould haue beene taken at his Word: Oh *Simon*, thy Sauiour is comne into thine owne ſhip to call thee, to call others by thee vnto bleſſedneſſe, and doeſt thou ſay, *Lord, goe from me?* As if the Patient ſhould ſay to the Phyſician; Depart from me, for I am ſicke. It was the

voyce of astonishment, not of dislike; the voyce of humility, not of discontentment: yea, because thou art a sinfull man, therfore hath thy Sauiour neede to come to thee, to stay with thee; and because thou art humble in the acknowledgement of thy sinfulnes, therfore Christ delights to abide with thee, and will call thee to abide with him; No man euer fared the worse for abasing himselfe to his God; Christ hath left many a soule, for froward and vnkinde vsage, neuer any for the disparagement of it selfe, and intreaties of humility. *Simon* could not deuise how to hold Christ faster, then by thus suing to him, to be gone,

gone, then by thus pleading his vnworthineſſe.

O my ſoule be not weary of complaining of thine owne wretchedneſſe, diſgrace thy ſelfe to him that knowes thy vilenes; be aſtoniſhed at thoſe mercies which haue ſhamed thine ill deſeruings; Thy Sauiour hath no power to goe away from a proſtrate hart; Hee that reſiſts the proud, hartens the lowly (*Feare not, for I will make thee hence forth a fiſher of men.*) Lo, this humility is rewarded with an Apoſtleſhip: What had the earth euer more glorious, then a legacy from heauen? He that bad Chriſt goe from him, ſhall haue the honor to goe firſt on this happy errand;

errand; This was a trade that *Simon* had no skill of: it could not but be enough to him, that Christ said, *I will make thee*; the miracle shewd him, able to make good his word; hee that hath power to command the fishes to be taken, can easily enable the hands to take them.

What is this diuine trade of ours then, but a spirituall piscation? The world is a sea; soules like fishes swim at liberty in this deep, the nets of wholsome doctrine, draw vp some to the shore of grace and glory; How much skill, and toyle, and patience, is requisite in this art? Who is sufficient for these things? This sea, these nets, the fishers,

fishers, the fish, the vessels are all thine, ô God; doe what thou wilt in vs, and by vs; Giue vs ability and grace to take, giue men will and grace to bee taken, and take thou glory by that which thou hast giuen.

The

The marriage in Cana.

WAS this then thy firſt miracle, ô Sauiour, that thou wroughts in Cana of Galile? And could there be a greater miracle then this, that hauing bene thirty yeares vpon earth, thou didſt no miracle till now? That thy diuinity did hide it ſelfe thus long in fleſh; that ſo long thou wouldſt lye obſcure in a corner of Galile; vnknowne to that world thou cameſt

cameſt to redeeme? That ſo long thou wouldſt ſtrayne the patient expectation of thoſe, who euer ſince thy Star, waited vpon the reuelation of a Meſſias? Wee ſilly wretches, if wee haue but a dram of vertue, are ready to ſet it out to the beſt ſhow, thou who receiuedſt not the Spirit by meaſure, wouldſt content thy ſelfe with a willing obſcurity, and concealedſt that power that made the world, in the roofe of an humane breſt, in a cottage of Nazareth. O Sauiour, none of thy miracles is more worthy of aſtoniſhment, then thy not doing of miracles. What thou didſt in priuate, thy wiſdome thought fit for ſecrecy;

cy; but if thy bleſſed mother had not beene acquainted with ſome domeſticall wonders, ſhe had not now expected a miracle abroad; The ſtarres are not ſeene by day; the Sun it ſelfe is not ſeene by night: As it is no ſmall art to hide Art, ſo is it no ſmall glory, to conceale glory; Thy firſt publique miracle graceth a marriage; It is an ancient and laudable inſtitution, that the rites of matrimony ſhould not want a ſolemne celebration; When are feaſts in ſeaſon, if not at the recouery of our loſt ribbe? If not at this maine change of our eſtate, wherein the ioy of obtaining, meets with the hope of further comforts? The Son of

of the Virgin, and the Mother of that Son are both at a wedding; It was in all likelyhood some of their kindred, to whose nuptiall feast, they were inuited so farre; yet was it more the honor of the act, then of the person, that Christ intended; He that made the first marriage in Paradise, bestowes his first miracle vpon a Galilean marriage; Hee that was the author of matrimony and sanctified it, doth by his holy presence, honest the resemblance of his eternall vnion with his Church: How boldly may we spit in the faces of all the impure aduersaries of wedlocke, when the Sonne of God pleases to honor it?

The

The glorious bride-groome of the Church, knew well how ready men would bee to place ſhame, euen in the moſt lawfull coniunctions; and therfore his firſt worke ſhall be, to countenance his own ordinance. Happy is that wedding, where Chriſt is a gueſt; O Sauiour, thoſe that marry in thee, cannot marry without thee; There is no holy marriage whereat thou art not (how euer inuiſible) yet truely preſent, by thy Spirit, by thy gracious benediction. Thou makeſt marriages in heauen, thou bleſſeſt them from heauen. Oh thou, that haſt betrothed vs to thy ſelfe in truth and righteouſneſſe, doe thou con-

consummate that happy marriage of ours in the highest heauens.

It was no rich or sumptuous Bridall, to which Christ with his Mother, & Disciples vouchsafed to come, from the further parts of Galile; I finde him not at the magnificent feasts or triumphs of the great; the proud pompe of the world, did not agree with the state of a seruant; This poore needy bride-groom wants drinke for his guests. The blessed virgin (though a stranger, to the house) out of a charitable compassion, and a frendly desire, to maintaine the decency of an hospital intertainment, inquires into the wants of her

hoſt; pittyes them, bemones them, where there was power of redreſſe; (*When the wine failed, the the mother of Ieſus ſaid vnto him, They haue no wine.*) How well doth it beſeeme the eyes of pietty, and chriſtian loue to looke into the neceſſities of others? She that conceiued the God of mercies, both in her heart, and in her wombe, doth not fixe her eyes vpon her owne trencher, but ſearcheth into the penury of a poore Iſraelite, and feeles thoſe wants, whereof he complaines not; They are made for themſelues, whoſe thoughts are only taken vp with their owne ſtore, or indigence.

There was wine enough for a meale,

meale, though not for a feaſt: and if there were not wine enough, there was enough water; yet the holy virgin complaines of the want of wine; and is troubled with the very lacke of ſuperfluity; The bounty of our God reaches not to our life only, but to our contentment; neither hath hee thought good to allow vs only the bread of ſufficiency, but ſomtimes of pleaſure. One while that is but neceſſary, which ſome other time were ſuperfluous. It is a ſcrupulous iniuſtice to ſcant our ſelues, where God hath bene liberall.

To whom ſhould wee complaine of any want, but to the

maker and giuer of all things? The bleſſed virgin knew to whom ſhe ſued; She had good reaſon to know the diuine nature and power of her Sonne: Perhaps the Bride-groome was not ſo needy, but if not by his purſe, yet by his credit, he might haue ſupplyed that want; or, it were hard if ſome of the neighbour-gueſts (had they bene duly ſolicited) might not haue furniſhed him with ſo much wine, as might ſuffice for the laſt ſeruice of a dinner; but bleſſed *Mary* knew a nearer way; ſhe did not thinke beſt to lade at the ſhallow channell, but runs rather to the well-head, where ſhe may dip, and fill the firkins

firkins at once, with eaſe. It may bee ſhee ſaw that the traine of Chriſt (which vnbidden followed vnto that feaſt, and vnexpectedly added to the number of the gueſts) might help forward that defect, and therefore ſhe iuſtly ſolicites her Son *Ieſus* for a ſupply: Whether wee want bread, or water, or wine; neceſſaries or comforts, whither ſhould we runne, ô Sauiour, but to that infinite munificence of thine, which neither denieth, nor vpbraideth any thing? We cannot want, wee cannot abound, but from thee; Giue vs what thou wilt, ſo thou giue vs contentment with what thou giueſt.

But what is this I heare? A ſharp anſwer to the ſuit of a mother? (*Oh woman what haue I to do with thee?*) He whoſe ſweet mildneſſe and mercy, neuer ſent away any ſuppliant diſcontented, doth he only frowne vpon her that bare him? He that commands vs to honor father and mother, doth hee diſdaine her whoſe fleſh he tooke? God forbid: Loue and duty doth not exempt parents from due admonition. She ſolicited Chriſt as a mother, he anſwers her as a woman: If ſhe were the mother of his fleſh, his deity was eternall; She might not ſo remember her ſelfe to be a mother, that ſhe ſhould forget ſhe was a woman;

man; nor ſo looke vpon him as a Son, that ſhee ſhould not regard him, as God; Hee was ſo obedient to her as a mother, that withall ſhe muſt obey him as her God; That part which he tooke from her ſhall obſerue her; She muſt obſerue that nature, which came from aboue; and made her both a woman, and a mother. Matter of miracle concerned the Godhead only; Supernaturall things, were aboue the ſphere of fleſhly relation; If now the bleſſed virgin will be preſcribing, either time, or forme vnto diuine acts, *O woman, what haue I to doe with thee, my houre is not come.* In all bodily actions his ſtile was, *O mother*;

In ſpirituall and heauenly, *O woman.* Neither is it for vs in the holy affaires of God, to know any faces, yea, if we haue known Chriſt heretofore according to the fleſh, henceforth know wee him ſo no more.

O bleſſed virgin, if in that heauenly glory wherin thou art, thou canſt take notice of theſe earthly things, with what indignation, Doſt thou looke vpon the preſumptuous ſuperſtition of vaine men, whoſe ſuits make thee more then a ſolicitor of diuine fauours? Thine humanity is not loſt in thy mother-hood, nor in thy glory: The reſpects of nature reach not ſo high as heauen; It is far from thee to abide that

that honour, which is ſtolne from thy Redeemer.

There is a marriage, whereto we are inuited, yea, wherein we are already intereſſed, not as the gueſts only, but as the Bride; in which there ſhall be no want of the wine of gladneſſe: It is maruell, if in theſe earthly banquets there be not ſome lacke; In thy preſence, ô Sauiour, there is fulneſſe of ioy, and at thy right hand are pleaſures for euermore Bleſſed are they, that are called to the marriage ſupper of the Lamb.

Euen in that rough anſwer, doth the bleſſed Virgin deſcry cauſe of hope. If his houre were not yet comne, it was therfore

fore comming; when the expectation of the guests, and the necessity of the occasion had made fit roome for the miracle, it shall come forth, & challenge their wonder. Faithfully therefore, and obseruantly, doth shee turne her speech from her Son to the Wayters (*Whatsoeuer hee saith vnto you, doe it.*) How well doth it beseeme the mother of Christ to agree with his Father in Heauen, whose voyce from Heauen sayd, *This is my welbeloued Son, heare him*; She that sayd of her selfe, *Be it vnto mee according to thy Word*, saies vnto others, *Whatsoeuer hee saith to you, doe it.* This is the way to haue miracles wrought in vs, obedience to his Word.

Word. The power of Christ did not stand vpon their officiousnesse; he could haue wrought wonders in spite of them; but their peruerse refusall of his commands, might haue made them vncapable of the fauour of a miraculous action: Hee that can (when hee will) conuince the obstinate, will not grace the disobedient. Hee that could worke without vs, or against vs, will not worke for vs, but by vs.

This very poore house, was furnished with many and large vessels, for outward purifications; As if sin had dwelt vpon the skin, that superstitious people sought holinesse in frequent washings

waſhings, Euen this rinſing fouled them, with the vncleanneſſe of a traditionall will-worſhip. It is the ſoule which needs ſcouring; and nothing can waſh that, but the bloud, which they deſperately wiſhed vpon themſelues, and their children; for guilt, not for expiation. Purge thou vs, ô Lord, with hyſſop, and we ſhall bee cleane, waſh vs and we ſhall be whiter then ſnow.

The wayters could not but thinke ſtrange of ſo vnſeaſonable a command; (*Fill the waterpots.*) It is wine that wee want, what doe we go to fetch water; Doth this holy man mean thus to quench our feaſt, and coole our

our ſtomachs? If there bee no remedy, wee could haue ſought this ſupply vnbidden; yet ſo far hath the charge of Chriſts mother preuailed, that in ſteede of carrying flagons of wine to the table, they goe to fetch pailes-full of water from the ciſternes. It is no pleading of vnlikelyhoods againſt the command of an Almighty power.

Hee that could haue created wine immediately in thoſe veſſels, will rather turne water into wine; In all the courſe of his mitacles, I doe neuer finde him making out of nothing; all his great workes are grounded vpon former exiſtences; he multiplyed the bread, hee changed

the water, he restored the withered lims, hee rayſed the dead; and ſtill wrought vpon that which was, and did not make that which was not: What doth he in the ordinary way of nature, but turne the watery iuyce that ariſes vp from the root, into wine; he will onely doe this now ſuddenly, and at once, which he doth vſually by inſenſible degrees. It is euer duly obſerued by the Son of God, not to doe more miracle then hee needes.

How liberall are the prouiſions of Chriſt? If he had turned but one of thoſe veſſels, it had beene a iuſt proofe of his power, and perhaps that quantity had

had ſerued the preſent neceſſity; now hee furniſheth them with ſo much wine, as would haue ſerued an hundred and fifty gueſts for an intire feaſt; Euen the meaſure magnifies at once, both his power and mercy. The munificent hand of God, regards not our neede onely, but our honeſt affluence: It is our ſin and our ſhame, if wee turne his fauour into wantonneſſe. There muſt be firſt a filling, ere there be a drawing out: Thus, in our veſſels, the firſt care muſt be of our receit; the next, of our expence: God would haue vs ciſternes, not channels.

Our Sauiour would not bee his owne taſter, but he ſends the firſt

first draught to the Gouernour of the feast. He knew his own power, they did not; Neither would he beare witnes of himselfe, but fetch it out of others mouthes; They that knew not the originall of that wine, yet prayſed the taſte; (*Euery man at the beginning, doth ſet forth good wine, and when men haue well drunk, then that which is worſe, but thou haſt kept the good wine vntill now*;) The ſame bounty that expreſſed it ſelfe in the quantity of the wine, ſhewes it ſelfe no leſſe in the excellence: Nothing can fall from that diuine hand not exquiſite: That liberality hated to prouide crab-wine for his gueſts. It was fit, that the miraculous effects

effects of Christ, (which came from his immediate hand) should be more perfect, then the naturall. O blessed Sauiour, how delicate is that new wine, which we shall one day drinke with thee, in thy Fathers Kingdome. Thou shalt turne this water of our earthly affliction, into that wine of gladnesse, wherewith our soules shall bee satiate for euer. Make haste, ô my Beloued, and bee thou like to a Roe, or to a young Hart, vpon the mountaine of spices.

The good Centurion.

EVEN the bloudy trade of warre yeelded worthy Clients to Chriſt: This Roman Captaine had learned to beleeue in that *Ieſus*, whom many Iewes deſpiſed: No nation, no trade, can ſhut out a good heart from God: If hee were a Forrainer for birth; yet he was a Domeſtique in heart; Hee could not change his bloud, hee could ouer-rule his affections; He

Hee loued that Nation, which was choſen of God; and if hee were not of the Synagogue, yet he built a Synagogue; where hee might not bee a Party, hee would be a Benefactor; Next to being good, is a fauouring of goodneſſe; We could not loue religion, if we vtterly wanted it: How many true Iewes were not ſo zealous? Either will, or ability lacked in them, whom duty more obliged; Good affections doe many times more then ſupply nature: Neither doth God regard whence, but what wee are.

I doe not ſee this Centurion come to Chriſt, as the Iſraelitiſh Captaine came to *Elias* in Car-

mel, but with his cap in his hand, with much ſuit, much ſubmiſſion, by others, by himſelfe; He ſends firſt the Elders of the Iewes, whom hee might hope, that their nation & place, might make gracious: then, leſt the imployment of others might argue neglect, he ſeconds them in perſon; Cold and fruitleſſe are the motions of frends, where wee doe wilfully ſhut vp our owne lips: Importunity cannot but ſpeede well in both. Could wee but ſpeake for our ſoules, as this Captaine did for his ſeruant, what could we poſſibly want? What maruell is it, if God bee not forward to giue, where wee care not to aske; or aske,

aske, as if wee cared not to receiue? Shall wee yet call this a ſuit, or a complaint? I heare no one word of entreaty; The leſſe is ſayd, the more is concealed, It is enough to lay open his wants; He knew well, that hee had to deale with ſo wiſe and mercifull a Phyſician, as that the opening of the malady was a crauing of cure: If our ſpirituall miſeries bee but confeſſed, they cannot faile of redreſſe.

Great variety of Suitors reſorted to Chriſt; One comes to him for a ſon, another for a daughter, a third for himſelfe: I ſee none come for his ſeruant, but this one Centurion; Neither was hee a better man then a Ma-

ſter: His ſeruant is ſicke; hee doth not driue him out of doores, but layes him at home; neither doth he ſtand gazing by his beds-ſide, but ſeekes forth; He ſeekes forth, not to Witches, or Charmers, but to Chriſt; he ſeekes to Chriſt, not with a faſhionable relation, but with a vehement aggrauation of the diſeaſe. Had the Maſter beene ſicke, the faithfulleſt ſeruant could haue done no more: He is vnworthy to bee well ſerued, that will not ſomtimes wait vpon his followers. Conceits of inferiority, may not breed in vs a neglect of charitable offices; ſo muſt we look downe vpon our ſeruants, here on earth, as that wee

wee muſt ſtill looke vp to our Maſter, which is in heauen.

But why didſt thou not, ô Centurion, rather bring thy ſeruant to Chriſt for cure, then ſue for him abſent? There was a Paralytick, whom faith and charity brought to our Sauiour, and let downe thorow the vncouered roofe, in his bed; why was not thine ſo carried, ſo preſented? Was it out of the ſtrength of thy faith, which aſſured thee, thou needeſt not ſhew thy ſeruant to him, that ſaw all things? One and the ſame grace, may yeeld contrary effects; They, becauſe they beleeued, brought the Patient to Chriſt, thou broughteſt not thine to him, be-

cause thou beleeuedst; Their act argued no lesse desire, thine, more confidence; Thy labour was lesse, because thy faith was more: Oh, that I could come thus to my Sauiour, and make such mone to him for my selfe: Lord, my soule is sicke of vnbeleefe, sicke of selfe-loue, sicke of inordinate desires, I should not needeto say more; Thy mercy, ô Sauiour, would not then stay for my suit, but would preuent me (as here) with a gracious ingagement, *I will come and heale thee*; I did not heare the Centurion say, *Either come, or heale him*: The one he meant, though hee sayd not, the other, he neither sayd, nor meant: Christ ouer-

ouer-giues, both his words and intentions; It is the manner of that diuine munificence, where he meets with a faithfull suitor, to giue more then is requested; to giue when he is not requested. The very insinuations of our necessities are no lesse violent, then successefull: Wee thinke the measure of humane bounty, runs ouer, when we obtaine but what wee aske with importunity; that infinite goodnesse keeps within bounds, when it ouer-flowes the desires of our hearts.

As he said, so hee did; The word of Christ either is his act, or concurres with it; He did not stand still when hee said, *I will come.*

come, but hee went as hee ſpake. When the ruler intreated him for his ſonne (*Come downe ere hee dye*) our Sauiour ſtird not a foote; The Centurion did but complaine of the ſicknes of his ſeruant, and Chriſt vnasked, ſaies, *I will come and heale him*; That he might be farre from ſo much as ſeeming to honor wealth, and deſpiſe meaneneſſe, he that came in the ſhape of a ſeruant, would goe downe to the ſicke ſeruants pallet, would not goe to the bed of the rich rulers ſonne; It is the baſeſt motiue of reſpect, that ariſeth merely from outward greatneſſe. Either more grace, or more need, may iuſtly challenge our fauourable

rable regards, no leſſe then priuate obligations.

Euen ſo, ô Sauiour, that which thou offeredſt to doe for the Centurions ſeruant, haſt thou done for vs; We were ſick vnto death; So farre had the dead palſy of ſinne ouertaken vs, that there was no light of grace left in vs; When thou wert not content to ſit ſtill in heauen, and ſay, *I will cure them*; but addeſt alſo, *I will come and cure them*; Thy ſelfe came downe accordingly to this miſerable world, and haſt perſonally healed vs; So as now we ſhall not dye but liue, and declare thy works, ô Lord; And oh! that we could enough praiſe that loue and mercy, which hath

hath ſo graciouſly abaſed thee, and could be but ſo low deiected before thee, as thou haſt ſtooped low vnto vs; that we could be but as lowly ſubiects of thy goodneſſe, as wee are vnworthy.

Oh admirable returne of humility: Chriſt will goe downe to viſit the ſicke ſeruant; the maſter of that ſeruant ſayes, *Lord I am not worthy that thou ſhouldſt come vnder my roofe*: The Iewiſh Elders, that went before to mediate for him, could ſay, (*He is worthy that thou ſhouldſt doe this for him*; but the Centurion, when hee comes to ſpeake for himſelfe (*I am not worthy*) They ſaid, He was worthy of Chriſts miracle;

miracle; He saies hee is vnworthy of Christs presence: There is great difference betwixt others valuations, and our owne; Sometimes the world vnderrates him that findes reason to set an high price vpon himselfe; Somtimes againe, it ouer-values a man that knowes iust cause of his owne humiliation; If others mistake vs, this can be no warrant for our error; Wee cannot be wise, vnlesse wee receiue the knowledge of our selues by direct beames, not by reflection; vnlesse we haue learned to contemne vniust applauses; and scorning the flatteryes of the world, to frowne vpon our owne vileness, *Lord I am not worthy.* Many

Many a one if he had bene in the Centurions cote, would haue thought well of it; A Captaine, a man of good ability and command, a founder of a Synagogue, a Patron of religion: yet he ouerlookes all these, and when he casts his eye vpon the diuine worth of Christ, and his owne weakenesse, he saies, *I am not worthy*; *Alas Lord I am a Gentile, an alien, a man of blood, thou art holy, thou art omnipotent.* True humility will teach vs to finde out the best of another, and the worst peece of our selues; Pride contrarily showes vs nothing, but matter of admiration in our selues; in others, of contempt. Whiles hee confest himselfe vnworthy

worthy of any fauour; he approued himselfe worthy of all. Had not Christ bene before in his heart, hee could not haue thought himselfe vnworthy to intertaine that guest within his house; Vnder the low roofe of an humble brest, doth God euer delight to dwel; The state of his Pallace may not bee measured by the height, but by the depth: Brags & bold faces do oft-times carry it away with men, nothing preuailes with God, but our voluntary deiections.

It is fit the foundations should be laid deep, where the building is high; The centurions humility was not more lowe; then his faith was lofty; that reaches vp

vp into heauen, and in the face of humane weakenesse deserue omnipotence; *Only say the word and my seruant shall be whole.*

Had the Centurions roofe bene heauen it selfe, it could not haue bene worthy to be comne vnder, of him, whose word was almighty, and who was the Almighty word of his Father, Such is Christ confessed by him that saies *Only say the word*; none, but a diuine power is vnlimited; neither hath faith any other bounds then God himselfe. There needs no footing to remoue mountaines, or Deuills, but a word; Doe but say the word, ô Sauiour, my sinne shall be remitted; my soule shall bee healed,

healed, my body ſhall be rayſed from duſt; both ſoule and body ſhall be glorious.

Whereupon then was the ſteddy confidence of the Good Centurion? He ſaw how powerfull his own word was with thoſe, that were vnder his command, (though himſelfe were vnder the command of another) the force whereof extended euen to abſent performances; well therefore might he argue, that a free and vnbounded power, might giue infallible commands, and that the moſt obſtinate diſeaſe, muſt therfore needs yeild to the becke of the God of nature: weakeneſſe may ſhow vs what is in ſtrength; By one

drop of water we may ſee what is in the maine Ocean; I maruell not if the Centurion were kinde to his ſeruants, for they were dutifull to him; he can but ſay, *Doe this*, and it is done; theſe mutuall reſpects draw on each other; cheerefull and diligent ſeruice in the one, calls for a due and fauourable care in the other; they that neglect to pleaſe, cannot complaine to bee neglected.

Oh that I could be but ſuch a ſeruant to mine heauenly Maſter; Alas, euery of his commands, ſayes, *Doe this*, and I doe it not; Euery of his inhibitions ſayes, *Doe it not*, and I doe it, He ſayes, *Goe from the world*, I run to it; he ſayes, *Come to mee*, I runne from

from him: Woe is mee, this is not ſeruice, but enmity; how can I looke for fauour, whiles I returne rebellion; It is a gracious Maſter whom wee ſerue; there can bee no duty of ours, that he ſees not, that he acknowledges not, that he crownes not; we could not but be happy, if we could be officious.

What can be more maruelous then to ſee Chriſt maruell? All maruelling ſuppoſes an ignorance going before, and a knowledge following ſome accident vnexpected: now who wrought this faith in the Centurion, but he that wondred at it? Hee knew well what hee wrought, becauſe hee wrought

what he would; yet he wondred at what he both wrought, and knew, to teach vs, much more to admire that which hee at once knowes and holds admirable.

Hee wrought this faith as God, he wondred at it as man; God wrought, and man admired, he that was both, did both; to teach vs where to bestow our wonder. I neuer finde Christ wondring at gold, or siluer; at the costly and curious workes of humane skill or industry; Yea, when the Disciples wondred at the magnificence of the Temple, he rebuked them rather: I finde him not wondring at the frame of heauen and

and earth, nor at the orderly disposition of all creatures and euents; the familiarity of these things intercepts the admiration; But when he sees the grace or acts of faith, he so approues them, that he is rauished with wonder; Hee that reioyced in the view of his creation, to see that of nothing, he had made all things good, reioyces no lesse in the reformation of his creature, to see, that hee hath made good of euill: Behold thou art faire, my loue, behold thou art faire, and there is no spot in thee; My sister, my spouse, thou hast wounded my heart, thou hast wounded my heart with one of thine eyes.

Our wealth, beauty, wit, learning, honor may make vs accepted of men, but it is our faith only, that ſhall make God in loue with vs; And why are we of any other ſaue Gods diet, to bee more affected with the leaſt meaſure of grace in any man, then withall the outward glories of the world? There are great men whom we iuſtly pitty, we can admire none but the gracious.

Neither was that plant more worthy of wonder in it ſelfe, then that it grew in ſuch a ſoyle, with ſo little help of raine and Sun; The weakneſſe of meanes, addes to the prayſe and acceptation of our proficiency: To do good

good vpon a little is the commendation of thrift; it is ſmall thanke to bee full-handed in a large eſtate; As contrarily, the ſtrength of meanes doubles the reuenge of our neglect: It is not more the ſhame of Iſrael, then the glory of the Centurion, that our Sauiour ſayes, *I haue not found ſo great faith in Iſrael*; Had Iſrael yeelded any equal faith, it could not haue beene vneſpyed of thoſe all-ſeeing eyes; yet were their helps ſo much greater, then their faith was leſſe; and God neuer giues more then hee requires: Where we haue laid our tillage, and compoſt, and ſeed, who would not looke for a crop? but if the vncultured fal-

low yeeld more, how iuſtly is that vnanſwerable ground neer to a curſe?

Our Sauiour did not mutter this cenſorious teſtimony to himſelfe, nor whiſper it to his Diſciples, but he turned him about to the people, and ſpake it in their eares, that hee might at once worke their ſhame and emulation: In all other things, except ſpirituall, our ſelfe-loue makes vs impatient of equals, much leſſe can we indure to bee out-ſtripped by thoſe, who are our profeſſed inferiours. It is well, if any thing can kindle in vs holy ambitions: Dull and baſe are the ſpirits of that man, that can abide to ſee another ouertake

ouertake him in the way, and out-run him to Heauen.

Hee that both wrought this faith, and wondred at it, doth now reward it, *Goe thy wayes, and as thou haſt beleeued, ſo bee it vnto thee*; Neuer was any faith vnſeene of Chriſt, neuer was any ſeene without allowance, neuer was any allowed without remuneration: The meaſure of our receits in the matter of fauour, is the proportion of our beleefe; The infinite mercy of God (which is euer like it ſelfe) followes but one rule in his gifts to vs, the faith that he giues vs: Giue vs, ô God, to beleeue, and bee it to vs as thou wilt; it ſhall bee to vs aboue that we will.

The

The Centurion ſues for his ſeruant, and Chriſt ſayes; *So bee it vnto thee*; The ſeruants health is the benefit of the Maſter; and the Maſters faith is the health of the ſeruant; And if the prayers of an earthly maſter, preuailed ſo much with the Sonne of God, for the recouery of a ſeruant, how ſhall the interceſſion of the Son of God, preuaile with his Father in Heauen, for vs that are his impotent children and ſeruants vpon earth? What can we want, ô Sauiour, whiles thou ſueſt for vs? Hee that hath giuen thee for vs, can deny thee nothing for vs, can deny vs nothing for thee; In thee we are happy, and ſhall be glorious;

glorious; To thee, ô thou mighty Redeemer of Israel, with thine eternall Father, together with thy blessed Spirit, one God infinite, and incomprehensible, be giuen all praise, honour, and glory, for euer and euer.

AMEN.

FINIS.

Errata.

PAg. 6. lin. 7 for *where*, read *when*. pag. 14. lin. 3. for *the*, read *he*. p. 29. l. 16. for *of*, r. *or*. p. 30. l. 16. for *vertue*, r. *wealth*. p. 32. l. for *foe*, r. *foyle*. p. 42. l. 9. for *deſection*, r. *deiection*. p. 44. l. 15. for *with*, r. *without*. p. 74. l. 6. for *to*, r. *them to*. p. 75. l. 5. for *not him*, r. *not to him*. p. 78. l. 9. for *deſtroyer*, r. *diſeaſe*. p. 147. l. penult. for *ceſſatum*, r. *ceſſation*. p. 150. l. 7. for *vnto*, r. *into*. p. 196. l. 2. for *we*, r. *he*. p. 205. l. 5. for *gentlieſt*, r. *goodlieſt*. p. 234. l. 2. for *eſtate*. r. *ſtate*. p. 234. l. 11. for *were*, r. *more*. p. 302. l. 5. for *whom*, r. *who*. p. 341. l. penult. for *careleſſe*, r. *careleſneſſe*. p 342. l. 5. for *diſſertion*, r. *deſertion*. p. 349. l. vlt. for *contents*, r. *contents himſelfe*. p. 363. l. 17. for *ſatiſfie*, r. *ſanctifie*. p. 371. l. 7. for *by them*, r. *by whom*. p. 378. l. 4. for *n*, r. *on*. p. 380. l. 5. for *Diuell*, r. *Duell*. p. 382. l. 1. for *can but*, r *conſiſt* p. 402. l. 11. for *vnchaſte*, r. *uncleane*. p. 410. l. for *not to beare*, r. *to beare*. p. 419. l. vlt. for *collection*, r. *collation*. p. 425. l. 2. for *creature*, r. *crowne*. p. 443. l. 4. for *againe*, r. *gaine*. p. 443. l. 10. for *he*, r. *we*. p. 467. l. 17. for *out*, r. *ought*. p. 481. l. 9. for *light*, r. *life*.